

BFS statement on Covid 19 vaccination and fertility treatment

The BFS supports the Covid 19 vaccination program and advises pregnant women and everyone wishing to start a family (including those who are undergoing fertility treatment) to have the vaccine when offered. We support efforts to encourage uptake of the vaccine in these patient groups and have created patient-facing FAQ on this subject (<https://www.britishfertilitysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Covid19-Vaccines-FAQ-2.1.pdf>). Patients need timely, accurate information and support from their healthcare professionals, so that they can have the confidence to deal with their concerns and any misinformation they might be exposed to.

We recognise that the pandemic has placed a huge amount of stress on fertility patients, who have suffered distress from delays and a temporary suspension of treatment. It is important that any policy decisions that involve a delay to treatment are time-limited, regularly reviewed and made with full consideration of patients' wellbeing. We support commissioners and clinics in minimising any delays, and for affected patients to be given access to timely and regular updates, appropriate counselling and care throughout.

The Covid-19 vaccine is effective in preventing severe disease. It is heart-breaking to learn of unvaccinated pregnant women who are seriously ill and have died with this disease, which could have been prevented by vaccination, and to see misinformation about the vaccine on various platforms. Studies show that Covid 19 vaccine does not harm fertility in men or women. It is not associated with any reduction in the chance of success with IVF. It does not increase the risk of miscarriage or harm the baby. Covid 19 on the other hand can cause serious illness in a small proportion of pregnant women and is associated with an increased risk of preterm birth, stillbirth and maternal death.