

Covid-19 vaccines and fertility



The British Fertility Society and Association of Reproductive and Clinical Scientists have created this document in response to questions from patients about Covid-19 vaccines and fertility. The availability of safe and effective vaccines against Covid-19 offers a way for our patients to protect themselves against this disease, prior to and during fertility treatment and during pregnancy.

These FAQs were created on 8th February 2021 and revised on 26th July 2021 and 11th January 2022. They are correct at the time of publication. Please be aware that the speed of scientific research in this area is very rapid. These FAQ are not exhaustive and we advise any concerned person to always discuss their individual situation with their healthcare provider.

Should people of reproductive age receive a Covid-19 vaccine?

Yes.

People of reproductive age are advised to have the vaccine when they receive their invitation for vaccination. This includes those who are pregnant or trying to have a baby as well as those who are thinking about having a baby, whether that is in the near future or in a few years' time.

Is Covid-19 vaccination recommended in pregnancy?

Yes.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists states that pregnant women are at increased risk of becoming severely unwell if they catch COVID-19, and their babies are more likely to have pregnancy complications like preterm birth or stillbirth (<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/#pregnancy>). Women who have had Covid-19 vaccination are much less likely to suffer from these problems. The vast majority of women who have needed intensive care due to Covid-19 in the UK were unvaccinated. Hence, Covid-19 vaccination is strongly recommended in pregnancy.

Can the Covid-19 vaccines affect fertility?

No.

There is no evidence, and no theoretical reason, that any of the vaccines can affect the fertility of women or men. Research has shown that ovarian reserve is not affected by the vaccine. Some women may notice a change in their next period after receiving the vaccine. We don't know if this is due to the vaccine or a chance event. However, it is a temporary effect and not likely to have consequences for your fertility.

A number of studies show that sperm test results are not affected by having the vaccine. On the other hand, Covid infection has the potential to reduce sperm quality.

Do the Covid-19 vaccines affect the chance of success with fertility treatment?

No.

Research has shown that the chance of success of IVF treatment is not affected by having the vaccine.

Can I have a Covid-19 vaccine during my fertility treatment?

Yes.

You may wish to consider the timing of having a Covid-19 vaccine during your fertility treatment, taking into account that some people may get side effects in the few days after vaccination that they do not want to have during treatment. These include for example, tenderness at the injection site, fever, headache, muscle ache or feeling tired. It may be sensible to separate the date of vaccination by a few days from some treatment procedures (for example, egg collection in IVF), so that any symptoms, such as fever, might be attributed correctly to the vaccine or the treatment procedure. Your medical team will be able to advise you about the best time for your situation.

Should I delay my fertility treatment until after I have had the Covid-19 vaccine?

The only reason to consider delaying fertility treatment until after you have been vaccinated would be if you wanted to be protected against Covid-19 before you were pregnant. The chance of successful treatment is unlikely to be affected by a short delay, for example of up to 6 months, particularly if you are 37 years of age or younger. However, delays of several months may affect your chance of success once you are over 37 and especially if you are 40 years of age or older.

How soon after having a Covid-19 vaccine can I start my fertility treatment?

Immediately – you do not need to delay your fertility treatment, unless you wish to have your second dose before pregnancy (see above). If you find out you are pregnant after you have had one dose of the vaccine (between doses), you are strongly advised to have your second dose 8 weeks after your first dose.

I had a positive pregnancy test today. Can I still have a Covid-19 vaccine?

Yes.

You can have the vaccine in pregnancy. In the UK, pregnant women are advised to have the Covid-19 vaccine. There is no reason to believe that any of the Covid-19 vaccines would be harmful in pregnancy. None of the vaccines contain live virus and so there is no risk that the pregnant woman or her baby could get Covid-19 from the vaccine. No safety concerns have been found in research studies that have followed up more than 130,000 pregnant women after mRNA Covid-19 vaccination in the USA and Scotland.

For further information on vaccination in pregnancy, see the information produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/#pregnancy>

The health care professional looking after you in pregnancy will be able to advise you taking into account your individual risk.

I am donating my eggs/sperm for the use of others. Can I still have a Covid-19 vaccine?

Yes.

Covid-19 vaccines do not contain any virus and so you cannot pass on Covid-19 by receiving the vaccine. The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority state that you must allow at least 7 days from the most recent vaccination prior to donating eggs or sperm. Ovarian stimulation for egg donors can start once 7 days have passed. If the donor feels unwell after the vaccination, they must not donate for 7 days after their symptoms have got better.

<http://www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/covid-19-and-fertility-treatment/coronavirus-covid-19-previous-updates-for-patients/>

I have had recurrent miscarriages and am now trying to get pregnant again. Should I postpone having a Covid-19 vaccine?

No.

There is no reason to postpone having your Covid-19 vaccine as it will not affect your risk of having a miscarriage.

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Disclaimer

This FAQ document represents the views of ARCS/BFS, which were reached after careful consideration of the scientific evidence available at the time of preparation. In the absence of scientific evidence on certain aspects, a consensus between the Executive teams and other members has been obtained.

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Please be aware that the evidence and advice for COVID-19 vaccines for those trying to achieve a pregnancy or those who are pregnant already is rapidly developing and the latest data or best practice may not yet be incorporated into the current version of this document. ARCS and BFS recommend that patients always seek the advice of their local centre if they have any concerns.