

Counselling Pregnant Women for COVID-19 Vaccines



**Fact-Sheet to guide the
Frontline Workers and Vaccinators**



As a Frontline Worker or a Vaccinator, you need to counsel pregnant women about the availability, value and precautions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. This note provides you with the information that you need to educate and support pregnant women so that they can make an informed decision about getting the COVID-19 vaccine. The note is structured in the form of questions-answers to make it easier for you to inform pregnant women and their families about the most important issues related to COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant women.



For additional information please contact Medical Officer of the nearest Health Centre.

01

Why is the COVID-19 vaccine being recommended for pregnant women?



- Pregnancy does not increase the risk of COVID-19 infection.
- Most pregnant women will be asymptomatic or have a mild disease, **BUT their health may deteriorate rapidly and that might affect the foetus too.**
- It is important that they take all precautions to protect themselves from acquiring COVID-19, including taking vaccination against COVID-19.
- It is therefore advised that a pregnant woman should take COVID-19 vaccines.



02

Who are at higher risk of getting infected with COVID-19?

- Someone who is a health care worker or a frontline worker.
- Community having a high or increasing rate of COVID-19 infections.
- Frequently exposed to people outside the household.
- Difficulty in complying with social distancing if living in a crowded household.

03

How does COVID-19 affect the health of the pregnant woman?

- Although most (>90 per cent) infected pregnant women recover without any need for hospitalization, rapid deterioration in health may occur in a few.
- Symptomatic pregnant women appear to be at an increased risk of severe disease and death. In case of severe disease, like all other patients, pregnant women shall also need hospitalization.
- Pregnant women with underlying medical conditions e.g., high blood pressure, obesity, age over 35 years are at a higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19.

04

How does COVID-19 infection in pregnant women affect the baby?

- Most (over 95 per cent) newborns of COVID-19 positive mothers have been in good condition at birth.
- In some cases, COVID-19 infections in pregnancy may increase the possibility of pre-mature delivery, the baby's weight might be less than 2.5 kg and in rare situations, the baby might die before birth.



05

Which pregnant women are at a higher risk of developing complications after COVID-19 infection?

Pregnant women who are:



Older than 35 years of age



Obese



Have a pre-existing illness such as diabetes or high blood pressure



Have a history of clotting in the limbs

06

If a pregnant woman has already had COVID-19, when should she be vaccinated?

- In case a woman has been infected with COVID-19 during the current pregnancy, then she should be vaccinated soon after the delivery.

07

Are there any side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines that can either harm the pregnant women or her foetus?

- The COVID-19 vaccines available are safe and vaccination protects pregnant women against COVID-19 illness/disease like other individuals.
- Like any medicine, a vaccine may have side effects which are normally mild. After getting the vaccine injection, she can get a mild fever, pain at the injection site or feel unwell for 1-3 days.
- The long-term adverse effects and safety of the vaccine for foetus and child is not established yet.
- Very rarely (one in 1-5 lakh persons), the pregnant women may experience some of the following symptoms within 20 days after getting the COVID-19 vaccination which may require immediate attention.



Symptoms occurring within 20 days after receiving any COVID-19 vaccine



Shortness of breath (difficulty in breathing)



Chest pain



Persistent abdominal pain with or without vomiting



Pain in limbs/pain on pressing the limbs or swelling in the limbs (arm or calf)



Small pinpoint haemorrhages (petechiae) or bruising of the skin beyond the injection site



Weakness/paralysis of limbs or any particular side of the body



Seizures with or without vomiting (in the absence of the previous history of seizures)



Severe and persistent headaches with or without vomiting (in the absence of the previous history of migraine or chronic headache)



Persistent vomiting without any obvious reason



Blurred vision/pain in eyes



Any other symptom or health condition which is of concern to the recipient or the family

08

What other precautions need to be taken after a pregnant woman gets the vaccine?

In order to protect themselves and those around from spreading the COVID-19 infection, you must counsel the pregnant woman and her family members to continue practicing the COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviours:



Wear a double mask



Practice frequent handwashing



Maintain physical distance and avoid going to crowded places

09

How does a pregnant woman register herself for COVID-19 vaccination?

All pregnant women need to register themselves on the Co-WIN portal or may get themselves registered on-site at the COVID-19 vaccination centre. The process of registration for pregnant women remains the same as of the general population and as per the latest guidance provided by the MoHFW from time to time.

Myth buster:
You cannot get COVID-19 infection from vaccination.

