"I'm pregnant. How can I keep safe? What should I do if I get COVID?"

At the best of times, pregnancy can be stressful. COVID makes it more so.

If you are pregnant, you're likely worried about getting COVID and anxious about what that would mean for your health and the health of your baby. That is all understandable.

You may also have questions about recieving COVID vaccines and treatments during pregnancy.

How does COVID affect pregnant people?

Getting COVID when you are pregnant can affect the health of you and your baby, especially if you have not had all recommended vaccine doses.

» People who are pregnant and get COVID have a higher risk of getting seriously ill and needing to go to hospital compared to people who are not pregnant.

» A COVID infection in pregnancy increases your risk of developing high blood pressure, going into labour early and of having a stillbirth. Your baby would also have a higher risk of growth problems and needing to be admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit.

How can I keep safe?

COVID vaccines are very effective at protecting you and your baby.

Being fully vaccinated (including boosters) reduces your risk of getting COVID, getting seriously ill and needing to be treated in hospital.

Family doctors, obstetricians, midwives, pediatricians and infectious disease experts all recommend that pregnant people get the COVID vaccine.

Updated: Apr. 5, 2022
For other questions, please visit **ConfusedAboutCOVID.ca**.

Family & Community Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Ontario College of
Family Physicians

1

For more information on vaccines in pregnancy, visit **pcmch.on.ca/covid-19-resources/**.

While COVID continues to be common in Ontario, there are things you can do to keep yourself and your baby safe. Limit indoor gathering with people outside your household. If indoors with people you don't live with, wear a well-fitted mask, keep a physical distance, wash your hands and make sure there is good ventilation.

Do I still need the vaccine if I already had COVID?

Yes. If you are pregnant and COVID positive, you should still be vaccinated. Being infected by COVID provides some protection to you and your baby, but it is unclear how long that protection lasts.

If you get vaccinated after recovering from COVID, research has proven that you will be better protected for a longer period of time than someone who had a COVID infection but no vaccine. Your baby will benefit from a longer period of protection against COVID if you get all recommended vaccine doses.

It is safe to be vaccinated as soon as your symptoms have gone away which will give you immediate protection. To get even stronger and longer-lasting protection, experts recommend waiting 8 weeks after a COVID infection to get dose 1 or dose 2 of a COVID vaccine. Experts recommend waiting at least 12 weeks after a COVID infection to get a booster dose.

What do I do if I get COVID?

If you are pregnant and think you have COVID, tell your pregnancy care provider — your family doctor, midwife, or obstetrician. Let your care provider know if you have not had all recommended COVID vaccine doses. They will help decide if medications are needed or if you and your baby need to be assessed. You might need to have ultrasounds more often to keep a closer eye on your pregnancy and baby.

How will I know if I have COVID?

You can assume you have COVID if you have symptoms of COVID or a positive Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). In Ontario, **people who are pregnant can have a PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test to confirm a diagnosis of COVID.**

To find out where you can get a COVID PCR test visit: **https://covid-19.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations/**

Updated: Apr. 5, 2022
For other questions, please visit **ConfusedAboutCOVID.ca**.

Family & Community Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Ontario College of
Family Physicians

2

If you have COVID symptoms, you must self-isolate. Learn more here: **rebrand.ly/Feeling-Unwell**.

How do I take care of myself and my baby if I have COVID?

Most pregnant people who have COVID will be able to recover at home:
- ✓ Rest and drink plenty of fluids
- ✓ Use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) to treat fever, headaches or muscle aches. Acetaminophen is safe to use in pregnancy and will not harm your baby
- ✓ If you are in your 3rd trimester (more than 6-months pregnant), pay close attention to how often your baby moves. Watch for signs of early labour

If you have not had any doses of a COVID vaccine, COVID treatments are available and recommended:
- ✓ Call your family doctor or pregnancy care provider right away for advice about medications for COVID.

Call and ask to speak to your family doctor or pregnancy care provider urgently if you:
- ✓ Feel light-headed and dehydrated (for example, if ongoing vomiting or diarrhea make you extremely thirsty and/or you are producing less urine than usual)
- ✓ Feel so tired you are finding it hard to care for yourself
- ✓ Have difficulty breathing when you are just doing your usual activities
- ✓ Start to recover then get worse again
- ✓ Cannot access food or other essential supports while self-isolating
- ✓ Are struggling with your mental well-being
- ✓ Notice your baby has stopped moving, if you start to have labour pains or if your water breaks

Updated: Apr. 5, 2022
For other questions, please visit **ConfusedAboutCOVID.ca**.

Family & Community Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Ontario College of
Family Physicians

3

Call 911, or go immediately to your nearest hospital, if you:
- ✓ Are short of breath while resting or if you are finding it harder and harder to breathe
- ✓ Have chest pain
- ✓ Notice from your at-home pulse-oximeter that your oxygen level dropped 3% over 24 hours, or is below 93% at any time
- ✓ Have labour pains that are severe or close together or notice bleeding from your vagina

For more information on:
- » Self-isolation during COVID: **rebrand.ly/Feeling-Unwell**
- » Notifying close contacts: **rebrand.ly/COVID-Close-Contact**
- » COVID and pregnancy: **https://www.instagram.com/pandemicpregnancyguide/?hl=en**
- » Medications to treat COVID: **rebrand.ly/COVID-medications**
- » COVID vaccines during pregnancy, breastfeeding and while trying to conceive: **https://www.sickkids.ca/en/care-services/support-services/covid-19-vaccine-consult/**

Updated: Apr. 5, 2022
For other questions, please visit **ConfusedAboutCOVID.ca**.

Family & Community Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Ontario College of
Family Physicians

4