

COVID-19 VACCINES





by EMILY ADHIKARI, MD

CURRENTLY, the two available vaccines for coronavirus disease 2019 are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. This type of vaccine teaches cells how to make a protein, starting an immune response that creates antibodies. The antibodies protect us from getting infected when exposed to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccine is different than influenza, or other vaccines, that rely on either live or inactivated virus to create the immune response.

There are two vaccines approved by the FDA. Both were tested to prevent COVID-19 disease.^{1,2}

	 Pfizer vaccine (BNT162b2)	 Moderna vaccine (mRNA-1273)
Approved age groups	>16 years	>18 years
Timing of 2nd dose	3 weeks (19-23 day range)	1 month (28 day)
Efficacy after 2nd dose	95% (90-97%): after 1-2 weeks	94.1%: after 2 weeks

Pregnancy & Lactation

- There is no evidence suggesting risk from mRNA vaccines in pregnant or lactating women, but long-term safety and efficacy studies have not yet been published. That said, there is no biologically plausible evidence to suggest that harm to a pregnant woman or her fetus is possible from these vaccines. The currently available COVID-19 vaccines contain a piece of mRNA delivered within a lipid capsule. This capsule fuses with the cell membrane to deliver the mRNA. This mRNA sends a message to the cell to trigger the immune response and then is quickly degraded, never entering the nucleus or changing DNA in any way.
- According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the COVID-19 vaccine should not be withheld from pregnant women who meet criteria for vaccination.³
- The vaccine also should be offered to lactating women.³ There is potential for a vaccinated mother to make protective antibodies that are passed to her infant based on experience with other vaccines in pregnancy (such as influenza vaccines), although this has not been completely studied yet for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The recommended considerations for vaccinating a pregnant woman against COVID-19 include the level of community transmission, her personal risks, and anticipated side effects, which are thought to be similar to other vaccines.
- If a fever develops, pregnant women may take acetaminophen.
- There is no need for a pregnancy test before vaccination.

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