Pregnant and Recently Pregnant People

What You Need to Know

- Although the overall risk of severe illness is low, pregnant people and recently pregnant people are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 when compared to non-pregnant people.1
- Having certain underlying medical conditions, and other factors, including age, can further increase a pregnant or recently pregnant person's risk for developing severe illness.
- Pregnant people with COVID-19 are also at increased risk for preterm birth (delivering the baby earlier than 37 weeks) and might be at increased risk for other poor pregnancy outcomes.
- Pregnant and recently pregnant people and people who live with or visit them need to take steps to protect themselves from getting sick with COVID-19.

Increased Risk of Severe Illness

Pregnant and recently pregnant people (for at least 42 days following end of pregnancy) are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people.1-3 Changes that occur in the body during pregnancy that increase risk for severe illness from respiratory viral infections like COVID-19 can continue after pregnancy. For example, increased risk for developing blood clots during pregnancy can continue after pregnancy and increase the risk for severe illness as seen in cases of H1N1 influenza in recently pregnant people.

Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may require:

- Hospitalization
- Intensive care
- A ventilator or special equipment to help them breathe

People with COVID-19 who become severely ill might even die.

Certain Factors Can Increase Risk

Other factors can further increase a pregnant or recently pregnant person's risk for experiencing severe illness from COVID-19, such as having certain underlying medical conditions or being older than a certain age.3 People with an underlying medical condition should continue to follow the treatment plan prescribed by their healthcare provider.

Conditions in the places where pregnant and recently pregnant people live, learn, work, play, and worship also affect health risks and outcomes, such as getting sick with COVID-19 or developing severe illness. For example, people who are pregnant and work in places where

they cannot keep their distance from people who might be sick, like healthcare providers, are at increased risk for getting sick and developing severe illness from COVID-19. Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put pregnant people from some racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

Understanding additional factors that can put pregnant and recently pregnant people at an increased risk can help them make decisions about what kind of precautions to take to protect themselves from infection.

Effect on Pregnancy Outcomes

Pregnant people with COVID-19 are at increased risk for preterm birth2,4 (delivering the baby earlier than 37 weeks) and might be at increased risk for other poor outcomes related to pregnancy compared to pregnant people without COVID-19. Other poor pregnancy outcomes, such as pregnancy loss,2 have been reported.

Reducing Your Risk of Getting COVID–19

It is especially important for pregnant and recently pregnant people, and those who live or visit with them, to take steps to protect themselves from getting COVID-19.

There is no way to have zero risk of infection, so it is important to know how to be as safe as possible. Consider your own personal situation and the risk for you, your family, and your community when deciding whether or not to go out or interact with people who do not live with you. Ensure you and the people who live with you are taking steps to protect themselves.

The best ways to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 are to:

- Consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have questions about getting vaccinated.
- Limit in-person interactions with people who might have been exposed to or who might be infected with COVID-19, including people within your household, as much as possible.
- Take steps to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others.
  - Wear a mask. Avoid others who are not wearing masks or ask others around you to wear a mask that fully covers the nose and mouth and fits well to the face.
  - Keep space between yourself and others (stay at least 6 feet away, which is about 2 arm lengths).
  - Avoid crowds.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash your hands often. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Then wash your hands.
- Clean surfaces and things you touch often with soap or detergent.
- Keep at least a 30-day supply of prescription and nonprescription medicines. Talk to your healthcare provider, insurer, or pharmacist about getting an extra supply (for example, more than 30 days) of prescription medicines, if possible, to reduce your trips to the pharmacy.