



## **Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series**

### **Resource List – February 2021**

#### **Emerging Priorities in Women’s Health**

##### **Management of COVID-19 in Pregnancy**

The guidance regarding the COVID-19 vaccine is rapidly developing. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) developed a Practice Advisory for [Vaccinating pregnant and lactating patients against COVID-19](#) (ACOG, 2020). This webpage provides an overview of currently available COVID-19 vaccines and guidance for their use in pregnant and lactating patients. The ACOG recommends that COVID-19 vaccines should not be withheld from pregnant women who meet criteria for vaccination based on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) priority groups.

Pregnant women are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, compared to non-pregnant women. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) webpage, [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) - Pregnancy, breastfeeding and caring for newborns](#) (CDC, 2020), details specific guidance in regards to pregnancy and COVID-19. The CDC recommends that pregnant women protect themselves by limiting interactions with people outside of their households, wearing a mask, and frequent hand washing to prevent adverse outcomes. COVID-19 is uncommon in newborns born to mothers who had the virus during pregnancy however, some newborns have tested positive shortly after birth. If diagnosed with COVID-19 after birth, have a health caregiver provide care for your newborn. If another caregiver is not available, wash hands before touching the newborn and wear a mask when within six feet of the newborn during the entire isolation period. Current evidence suggests that breast milk is not likely to spread the COVID-19 virus to babies and provides protection against many other illnesses.

A critical component in the management of any communicable disease threat is the care of vulnerable populations. Pregnant women are known to be disproportionately affected by respiratory illnesses, which are associated with increased infectious morbidity and high maternal mortality rates. The journal article, [Coronavirus disease 2019\(COVID-19\) pandemic and pregnancy](#) (Dashraath et al., 2020), concludes that pregnant women represent a uniquely vulnerable group due to altered physiology, susceptibility to infections and compromised mechanical and immunological functions. The current outbreak of COVID-19 places pregnant women and their fetuses at high-risk for complications. Fetal complications of COVID-19 include miscarriage, intrauterine growth and preterm birth. Much of the obstetric management is based on consensus and best practice recommendations, as clinical data regarding antiviral therapy and corticosteroid use is evolving.

The World Health Organization (WHO) compiled a list of resources, [COVID-19: Resources for Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Postnatal Care](#), (WHO, 2020) that includes guidance documents on COVID-19, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. A Question and Answers document with new research to help increase the understanding of the impact of COVID-19 for pregnant women and their babies is available. The Questions and Answers document also provides information on transmission of infection between the mother and unborn/new baby. Links to guidance on infection prevention and control, clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection, and sexual and reproductive health and rights are also included.



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### References

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2020, December 21). *Vaccinating pregnant and lactating patients against COVID-19*. www.acog.org. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Pregnancy, breastfeeding and caring for newborns*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>
- Dashraath, P., Wong, J. L. J., Lim, M. X. K., Lim, L. M., Li, S., Biswas, A., Choolani, M., Mattar, C., Su, L. L. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and pregnancy. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 222(6), 521–531. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2020.03.021>
- World Health Organization. (2020). *COVID-19: Resources for pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care*. [https://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/links/covid-19-mncah-resources-for-pregnancy-childbirth-postnatalcare/en/](https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/links/covid-19-mncah-resources-for-pregnancy-childbirth-postnatalcare/en/)