



Update to the Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health COVID-19 Guidelines January 6, 2021

The Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health (PCMCH) is continually reviewing evidence on the impact of COVID-19 in pregnancy. To supplement information in the PCMCH [COVID-19 General Guideline](#) and [COVID-19 Pregnancy Care Guideline](#), we have highlighted here how new evidence can affect current practice.

COVID-19 Positive Pregnant People and Increased Risk in Pregnancy

There are emerging data from Canada and international jurisdictions that pregnant individuals infected with COVID-19 are at increased risk for severe morbidity and mortality.^{1,2,3,4,5} The current Canadian findings indicate that pregnant people infected with COVID-19 are at increased risk of hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) admission, specifically those with underlying conditions such as obesity and diabetes.⁵

PCMCH advises that pregnant people must continue to maintain all precautions (such as masking, physical distancing and infection prevention). It is important that care providers offer pregnant people **individualized risk assessments** to determine their **safety to work**, including work-related risk, individual risk and local disease activity.⁴ The assessment should include a review of the patient's history, health status and relevant comorbidities.⁴ It is important that care providers share information with pregnant individuals that may be relevant to their risk status and also respect their autonomy to make informed choices in their plan of care. The new information may also inform care provided to pregnant individuals with proven or suspected COVID-19 infections.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

With the recent release of the COVID-19 vaccine(s), those who are breastfeeding, pregnant, or those who plan to be pregnant, should discuss their eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine with their care provider. Currently there are neither data on safety of administration in pregnancy nor a biological rationale for harm⁶. PCMCH advises that individuals who may be pregnant, are pregnant, or are breastfeeding have the **right to receive the vaccine**, should they choose to after a discussion with their care provider⁷. This discussion should include information on risks and benefits of the vaccine, an assessment of whether the vaccine's benefits would outweigh the potential risks to the person, and/or fetus, and a disclosure that there is not yet evidence of the vaccine's effects in pregnant and lactating individuals^{7,8}. After a thorough discussion with their provider, each person is in a better position to make an informed choice on whether to be vaccinated.

PCMCH remains diligent in following up with the developing information and will issue updates as new evidence becomes available. PCMCH recommends that clinicians continue to contribute to the gathering of Ontario clinical cases data by submitting [BORN Ontario Case Reports](#) online so that as a health system, we can further our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on pregnancy outcomes.

¹ Zambrano LD, Ellington S, Strid P, Galang RR, Oduyebo T, Tong VT, et al. *Characteristics of Symptomatic Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Pregnancy Status - United States*. 2020, MMWR.

² Allotey J, Stallings E, Bonet M, Yap M, Chatterjee S, Kew T, et al. *Clinical manifestations, risk factors, and maternal and perinatal outcomes of coronavirus disease 2019 in pregnancy: living systematic review and meta-analysis*. 2019, BMJ.

³ Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization. *Epidemiological Update: Covid-19 in pregnant women*. Pan American Health Organization. [Online] August 2020. <https://www.paho.org/en/documents/epidemiological-alert-covid-19-during-pregnancy-13-august2020>

⁴ Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. *SOGC Statement on Pregnant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. [Online] November 2020. [https://sogc.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Covid%20Information/SOGC%20Statement%20on%20Pregnant%20Workers%20during%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic%20\(November%2019,%202020\).pdf](https://sogc.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Covid%20Information/SOGC%20Statement%20on%20Pregnant%20Workers%20during%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic%20(November%2019,%202020).pdf).

⁵ Canadian Surveillance of COVID-19 in Pregnancy: Epidemiology, Maternal and Infant Outcomes. [Online] December 2, 2020. https://med-fom-ridresearch.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/12/CANCOVID-Preg-report-1-BC-AB-ON-data_02DEC2020-V2.pdf.

⁶ National Advisory Committee on Immunization . National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Statements and publications. *Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccine(s)*. [Online] <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>.

⁷ Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. *SOGC Statement on COVID-19 Vaccination in Pregnancy*. [Online] December 18, 2020. <https://sogc.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Latest%20News/SOGC%20Statement%20COVID-19%20Vaccination%20in%20Pregnancy.pdf>.

⁸ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients against COVID-19*. [Online] December 13, 2020. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19>.