

## **Talking points - COVID-19 Vaccine and Reproductive Health:**

With ongoing COVID-19 surges, the need for vaccine uptake among adolescent and young adults is critical to safety and decreasing transmission. Although there is no preferred vaccine formulation, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is the sole formulation that received full FDA approval. Twelve to seventeen-year olds are currently only eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The FDA has also recently approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those 5-11 years of age, and it is anticipated that other countries will approve the same in the coming weeks around the world.

Parents and patients have questions about the safety of this vaccine and specific concerns pertaining to the vaccine's impact on fertility and long-term reproductive health. NASPAG has created talking points to help aid clinicians and health-care providers in answering these questions to promote vaccine acceptance and to alleviate unfounded vaccine safety concerns.

### *Fertility*

- There are erroneous claims in lay news, amplified via social media, that there is a link between COVID-19 vaccination and detrimental impact to future fertility.
- COVID vaccine does not cause harm to reproductive health and this myth has no basis in science.
- The claims that the vaccine could attack other proteins in the body, such as a protein in the human placenta (syncytin-1) and/or bind to the ovary in a detrimental way are not evidence based and have been solidly scientifically refuted.
- Numerous professional societies, including American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), issued a joint statement sharing that there is no evidence that the vaccine is associated with declines in fertility. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) has issued a similar statement.

### *Pregnancy*

- The COVID vaccine has been studied among individuals who are trying to get pregnant, who are currently pregnant, who are postpartum and breastfeeding without adverse effect.
- The COVID vaccines do not alter a person's DNA or that of their offspring.

- Expert medical societies and organizations including ACOG, SMFM, ASRM, SOGC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RCOG) are encouraging pregnant people to get vaccinated.

## *Menstrual Cycles*

- There have been anecdotal reports of temporary changes to menstrual patterns, such as heavier menstrual bleeding, following a recent COVID-19 vaccine. There has been no scientific evidence that this is a sign of vaccine effect on ovarian function.
- While there is a connection between activation of the immune system and menstruation, having a change in one's menstrual period (ie. missed period, spotting, irregular bleeding, heavier period) does not mean that there is a health concern or an effect on one's fertility.
- There are many factors that contribute to a menstrual cycle. It is not abnormal to miss a period (or have a change in menstrual flow) every once in a while. Changes in menstrual cycles can be altered by stress, changes in diet and exercise or as a consequence of other health issues. There is no scientific evidence to support an impactful disruption of the menstrual cycle due to the COVID-19 vaccine.

## RESOURCES/LINKS

<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/covid-19-vaccination-considerations-for-obstetric-gynecologic-care>

<https://www.asrm.org/news-and-publications/news-and-research/press-releases-and-bulletins/new-study-reveals-covid-vaccine-does-not-cause-female-sterility/>

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/experts-and-stories/the-latest/7-reassuring-facts-about-covid-19-vaccines>

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-womens-health/covid-19-vaccines-and-pregnancy/covid-19-vaccines-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding/>

SOGC Statement on COVID-19 Vaccination in Pregnancy. May 4, 2021. [https://sogc.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Latest%20News/SOGC\\_Statement\\_COVID-19\\_Vaccination\\_in\\_Pregnancy.pdf](https://sogc.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Latest%20News/SOGC_Statement_COVID-19_Vaccination_in_Pregnancy.pdf)

ASRM, ACOG and SMFM Issue Joint Statement: Medical Experts Continue to Assert that COVID Vaccines Do Not Impact Fertility. American College of Obstetricians and

Gynecologists , the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. 05 Feb, 2021. Press Release. <https://www.acog.org/news/news-releases/2021/02/medical-experts-assert-covid-vaccines-do-not-impact-fertility>