



The Northwestern Specialists For Women

Covid-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy

We understand that this is an unprecedented time that directly impacts and affects the health of you and your family. We are fortunate that, as a part of Northwestern Memorial Hospital, we are practicing the type of medicine where your care and safety will be protected to the best of our ability. While this continues to be an evolving situation, we have put together some guidelines and updates to help you navigate. We will continue to be open to take care of your medical needs, but reducing everyone's risk to Covid-19 is our utmost responsibility.

Covid-19 and Pregnancy: Patients with Covid-19 who are pregnant have a 5X increased risk of ending up in an ICU (intensive care unit) or on a ventilator than a non-pregnant patient with Covid-19. There are studies that have been able to associate a Covid-19 infection in pregnancy with preterm labor and growth restriction for the fetus. Studies are inconclusive as to whether there is an increased risk of a still birth. For these reasons and more, prevention is the key to the promotion of a healthy pregnancy.

Covid Vaccine: At this time, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine (SMFM) have advocated that anyone, pregnant or not, who is a candidate for the vaccine should feel confident in receiving it. While vaccine trials did not include pregnant or breastfeeding women, there is no indication that the vaccine shouldn't be safe to receive. In fact, SMFM's statement is that they "strongly recommend that pregnant women are given access to the Covid-19 Vaccine, and then a decision is made between that woman and her health provider regarding her personal choice." ACOG states "the Covid vaccine should NOT be withheld from women who meet all other criterias for vaccination." It is important to note that the vaccine contains NO LIVE VIRUS, has no ingredients that are known to cause developmental harm to the fetus, and there is a long history of giving vaccines during a pregnancy safely, such as with influenza and the TDAP vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis). We will respect all decisions you may make regarding this and other vaccines.

Covid Vaccine side effects: It is likely that an individual receiving the vaccine may experience side effects. In most cases, these side effects are mild and pose no harm to the individual or to the fetus if pregnant. Most of these side effects correspond with the normal activation of the immune system which is what will eventually lead to immunity to the Covid-19 virus. These side effects can include: fever over 100.4 (14%), sore arm at the site of injection (84%), muscle pain (38%), fatigue (62%), , headache (55%), chills (32%). Please note that a temperature under 100.4 is not considered a medical fever. Tylenol is safe to take for all individuals to help with these side effects, if appropriate. If these symptoms last for longer than a week, let your health care provider know.

Covid Vaccine and Breastfeeding: According to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), the Covid-19 vaccine should be offered to breastfeeding individuals when they meet other criteria for obtaining it. There is no need to stop breastfeeding when getting the vaccine.

Prevention: Prevention is still key to avoid all types of infections, not just Covid-19. Wearing a 3-layer mask, physically distancing at least 6 feet, and washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water is still the gold standard not only for the prevention of Covid-19, but even for influenza and the common cold. As difficult as it may be, please follow CDC guidelines regarding gatherings and outings, realizing that transmission may occur asymptotically.

Office visits: We depend on you to keep our doors open for care! You will be required to wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to enter the office. If you have traveled, please let us now so that we can determine whether the appropriate quarantine time has passed or if special considerations need to be made for your visit. If you have a fever, flu like symptoms, persistent diarrhea or have been in contact with individuals with these symptoms, please let us know this prior to your scheduled visit as well. Also, please let us know if you have been diagnosed with Covid-19 so that we can make sure you are receiving appropriate care as well as timing your appointments appropriately. At this time, ONLY the patient may come to any office visit-- this means no partners, children, babies. If you are hospitalized for any reason, including delivery, the recommendation is only one support person with you at the hospital. That individual will be required to wear a mask at the hospital at all times.