



Society for  
Maternal • Fetal  
Medicine  
High-risk pregnancy experts

Dear SMFM Members:

Today the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [issued the first Emergency Use Authorization](#) for a COVID-19 vaccine. As part of their announcement, the FDA included [patient education materials](#) related to vaccination that say, **"If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, discuss your options with your healthcare provider."**

In response, we released the following statement:

"SMFM applauds the FDA's recent decision, which will allow pregnant and lactating people to access the COVID-19 vaccine. It is expected that this decision will impact pregnant and lactating healthcare workers beginning as early as next week. In addition to affording significant individual-level protections, keeping health care workers safe enables them to continue to provide medical care to those who are sick with COVID-19 or other illnesses.

An estimated 75% of healthcare workers are women and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 330,000 healthcare workers will be pregnant or will have recently given birth when COVID-19 vaccines become more widely available. Recent data have demonstrated that pregnant people are more likely to have severe COVID disease, including an increased risk of ICU admission and death.

In general, [SMFM strongly recommends that pregnant and lactating people have access to COVID-19 vaccines](#) and that they engage in a discussion about potential benefits and unknown risks together with their healthcare providers regarding receipt of the vaccine. As stated previously, counseling should balance the lack of data on vaccine safety for the fetus, risks to pregnant people from COVID-19 infection, and a person's individual risk for infection and severe disease.

SMFM acknowledges that data do not exist regarding COVID-19 vaccine safety in pregnant and lactating people, and has long advocated that pre-clinical studies be conducted and that these [populations be included in clinical trials](#). As data emerge, counseling and clinical recommendations will likely shift, as some vaccines may be more suitable for pregnant women."