

## Pregnant women were excluded from COVID vaccine trials. Now many are debating if they want to risk getting a shot

As the F.D.A.-approved vaccine candidates make their way from production lines to frontline workers in nursing homes, hospitals, and in other essential professions, people who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or trying to conceive must contend with the lack of data on how these vaccines will affect them, a developing fetus, or a breast-feeding infant.

Although women of reproductive age make up a substantial share of the health-care workforce and the majority of nursing assistants and home health aides, protocols for the coronavirus-vaccine trials specifically exclude pregnant and lactating women, and often contain language requiring that participating women use contraception.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists published [an advisory note](#) last December, which said currently available vaccines “should not be withheld from pregnant individuals” and “should be offered to lactating individuals.”

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The statement stops short of encouraging uptake of the vaccine in the pregnant population, instead encouraging pregnant individuals to be “free to make their own decision regarding COVID-19 vaccination.”

“Is that even helpful?” [pregnant nurse] Amanda recalled wondering after she read the statement.

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“If we don’t have vaccines that are proven to be safe and effective in pregnant women, we don’t have a vaccine for health-care workers,” [said microbiologist] Emily Erbelding.

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