

# COVID-19 advice for pregnant women and new parents

If you are pregnant, planning a family or are a new parent, there are some tips to make it easier to navigate these new life moments with COVID-19.

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## Additional 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose (booster)

1 September 2023 – The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has recommended some people at higher risk of severe illness get an additional 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose (booster) if eligible. [Read what the latest advice from ATAGI means for you \(/covid-19/vaccination/get-vaccinated/boosters\).](#)

# Simple steps to protect yourself



**Speak to your doctor before you get sick**



**Understand what test to do when you feel unwell**



**Check if you're eligible for appropriate treatments if you test positive**



**Stay up to date with your recommended vaccinations**

## Staying safe

There are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 if you are pregnant, planning a family or are a new parent:

- stay up to date with your recommended vaccinations
- get together outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor spaces
- consider wearing a face mask in crowded, indoor places
- continue to attend any medical appointments you may have
- talk to your doctor or midwife now so you understand your options if you test positive to COVID-19, including what test you should get if you get sick and if you need a pathology form for the test.

Antiviral medicines are generally not recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding and test positive to COVID-19, however there may be other treatments available. For more information, speak to your doctor or midwife.

## COVID-19 vaccinations for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy. Pregnant women who have already received a primary course should discuss with their doctor or vaccination provider whether a booster dose is required during their pregnancy.

Information on COVID-19 vaccination can be found in the **[COVID-19 vaccination - Shared decision making guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-shared-decision-making-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy)** [\[ \]](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-shared-decision-making-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy) [.\(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-shared-decision-making-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy\)](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccination-shared-decision-making-guide-for-women-who-are-pregnant-breastfeeding-or-planning-pregnancy).

For more information **[read the latest guidance from ATAGI](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance/clinical-recommendations#booster-dose-recommendations)** [\[ \]](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance/clinical-recommendations#booster-dose-recommendations) [.\(https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance/clinical-recommendations#booster-dose-recommendations-\)](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance/clinical-recommendations#booster-dose-recommendations) or talk to your doctor, midwife or vaccination provider.

**[Book your appointment online](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/)** [\[ \]](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/) [.\(https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/\)](https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/).

A free Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) **[131 450](tel:131450)** [\[ \]](tel:131450) [.\(tel:131450\)](tel:131450) is also available.

You can SMS “Hey EVA” to 0481 611 382 if you need support to get a vaccine.

Get answers to frequently asked questions about **[COVID-19 vaccination from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance \(NCIRS\)](https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions)** [\[ \]](https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions) [.\(https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions\)](https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions). NCIRS is the leading research organisation in Australia on vaccine preventable diseases and immunisation.

## Getting tested for COVID-19

Pregnant women may be **[at higher risk of severe illness](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19#toc-who-is-at-higher-risk-of-severe-illness)** [\[ \]](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19#toc-who-is-at-higher-risk-of-severe-illness) [.\(https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19#toc-who-is-at-higher-risk-of-severe-illness\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19#toc-who-is-at-higher-risk-of-severe-illness) from COVID-19 (more likely to get very sick and may be at risk of needing hospital care) than women who are not pregnant.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, cough or fever), contact your doctor for testing advice.

If you can't contact your doctor, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222 or use the online **[service finder](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services)** [\[ \]](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services) [.\(https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services) to find a GP near you.

If your doctor recommends a COVID-19 PCR test, they will give you a pathology referral form for a free COVID-19 PCR test.

The referral form will have a private pathology provider location on it which you will need to visit so you can get tested.

For more information, visit **[What COVID-19 test should I do?](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19)** [\[ \]](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19) [.\(https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/get-tested-for-covid-19).

For more information if you test positive to COVID-19, visit **Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/management/advice-for-confirmed>)**.

## If you test positive to COVID-19

Most pregnant women will be able to safely stay at home while they have COVID-19. During this time it is important to do the following:

- You can take paracetamol if you feel unwell, to help with symptoms. Ibuprofen is not recommended while you are pregnant
- Stay hydrated
- Mobilise regularly to reduce your risk of developing blood clots. If you have a history of blood clots or are obese, please contact your GP or maternity care provider to discuss your care options
- Keep a close eye on your baby's movements. Call your maternity care provider immediately **if your baby's movements change**, if you are in labour or experience:
  - o vaginal bleeding
  - o abdominal pain
  - o constant clear watery vaginal discharge
  - o contractions any time before 37 weeks
  - o persistent fever
  - o headaches
  - o sudden swelling of your face and hands
  - o have any serious concerns about your pregnancy
- Call Triple Zero (000) if you have difficulty breathing, develop chest pressure or pain, have severe headaches or dizziness. Tell ambulance staff that you have COVID-19 and are pregnant.
- Continue your regular antenatal care after recovering from COVID-19.

If you have tested positive to COVID-19 in the week before a planned caesarean or induction of labour, or you have recently tested positive and are in labour, call your midwife or doctor.

For more information, see the **testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home ([https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2023-02/Testing\\_positive\\_to\\_COVID-20\\_2\\_23.pdf](https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2023-02/Testing_positive_to_COVID-20_2_23.pdf))** fact sheet.

## If you have been exposed to someone who has COVID-

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If you have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, you are at increased risk of getting COVID-19. There are simple steps you can take to reduce the risk to others:

- Monitor for symptoms. If you get symptoms, contact your doctor for testing advice and stay home.
- Unless it is for medical care, avoid visiting hospitals or other healthcare settings for at least 7 days. If you have to visit do a rapid antigen test and wear a mask. If your due date, planned caesarean or induction of labour is during this time, call your midwife or doctor.
- Avoid visiting other high-risk settings such as aged or disability care facilities, or visiting anyone at higher risk of severe illness for at least 7 days.
- Consider wearing a mask when indoors and on public transport.
- Regular rapid antigen testing (RAT) may help identify the infection early – this is particularly important if you are in contact with people at high risk of severe illness.

See the **[advice for people exposed to COVID-19 \(https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/people-exposed-to-covid\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/people-exposed-to-covid)** fact sheet for more information.

## Pregnancy, breastfeeding and COVID-19

If you are pregnant, you might be worried about how to protect yourself and your baby from COVID-19.

Learn what you can do to limit your exposure and reduce the risk for you and your family with healthdirect's **[pregnancy and COVID-19](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19/pregnancy-and-covid-19)** [\[1\]](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19/pregnancy-and-covid-19) advice.

You can keep breastfeeding if you have COVID-19. Breastfeeding is safe and the best way to feed your baby. For more information about breastfeeding with COVID-19, visit **[breastfeeding with COVID-19 or flu](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/child/Pages/breastfeeding-covid-flu.aspx)** [\[2\]](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/child/Pages/breastfeeding-covid-flu.aspx).

## Information for parents and carers

Most children who test positive to COVID-19 can be safely cared for at home by their usual household carers, even if they are not vaccinated. See the **[testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 at home fact sheet \(https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/advice-for-confirmed#toc-how-do-i-manage-a-baby-or-child-with-covid-19\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/advice-for-confirmed#toc-how-do-i-manage-a-baby-or-child-with-covid-19)** for more information.

Find information on COVID-19, vaccinations and protective hygiene, plus tips to help you and your family in the Raising Children's **COVID-19 family guide** [↗](https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia) (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-guide/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia>).

## Related information

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**Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home** [↗](#) [\(/covid-19/testing-managing/advice-for-confirmed\)](/covid-19/testing-managing/advice-for-confirmed)

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**COVID-19 information for people at higher risk of severe illness** [↗](#) [→](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/covid-info-high-risk-people.aspx) (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/covid-info-high-risk-people.aspx>)

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