



# BREASTFEEDING & COVID-19 VACCINE GUIDANCE

## BACKGROUND

Lactating women were not included in most clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccines. Data is currently being collected as breastfeeding women get vaccinated. These vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant.<sup>1</sup>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends COVID-19 vaccines be offered to lactating individuals similar to non-lactating individuals<sup>2</sup> and the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) encourages that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the concerns regarding safety of vaccination in lactating women. There is no need to avoid initiation or discontinue breastfeeding in patients who receive a COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>3</sup>

## VACCINES AVAILABLE

There are currently 3 vaccines on the market in the United States, two that are mRNA vaccines and one viral vector vaccine. None of these vaccines contain the COVID-19 virus, thus you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

- 1. Pfizer**  
2 doses, at least 3 weeks apart  
mRNA
- 2. Moderna**  
2 doses, at least 4 weeks apart  
mRNA
- 3. Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen**  
1 dose  
Viral vector

Although mRNA vaccines are a new type of vaccine, researchers have been studying and working with them for decades.<sup>4</sup> Scientists have been creating viral vector vaccines since the 1970s.<sup>5</sup>

## AFTER THE VACCINE

After receiving the vaccine, it's important to continue wearing masks, washing hands, and social distancing. Even after receiving the vaccine, you can still get COVID with reduced severity and transmit COVID to other individuals.

While the vaccine is safe and effective, the science is still emerging regarding how long the protective effects of the vaccine will last.

## GLOSSARY

Fully Vaccinated – individuals are considered fully vaccinated:

- » 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- » 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

**mRNA Vaccine** – a type of vaccine that teaches the body's cells how to make a protein, or even just a piece of a protein, that triggers an immune response inside the body.<sup>6</sup>

**Vector Vaccine** – a type of vaccine that uses a modified version of a different virus (the vector) to deliver important instructions to the body's cells.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) Information about COVID-19 Vaccines for People who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>.

<sup>2</sup>American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (2020) Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19. Accessed online: <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19>.

<sup>3</sup>Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (2020) ABM Statement Considerations for COVID-19 Vaccination in Lactation. Accessed online: <https://abm.memberclicks.net/abm-statement-considerations-for-covid-19-vaccination-in-lactation>.

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>.

<sup>5</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) Understanding Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/viralvector.html#:~:text=Scientists%20began%20creating%20viral%20vectors,and%20published%20around%20the%20world>.

<sup>6</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>.

<sup>7</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) Understanding Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/viralvector.html#:~:text=Scientists%20began%20creating%20viral%20vectors,and%20published%20around%20the%20world>.

