



“A Sincere Appeal to Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women to Receive COVID-19 Vaccination to Prevent Severe Illnesses and to Reduce the Risk of Infection in Newborn Infants - Joint Statement by The Hong Kong Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Paediatric Society, the Macau Pediatric Society, the College of Nursing Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Midwives Association, The Hong Kong Society for Paediatric Immunology Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the Hong Kong College of Paediatric Nursing and the Hong Kong Paediatric Nurses Association”

The number of confirmed cases of the COVID-19 Omicron infection has recently hit record highs. Apart from infants and young children, pregnant women are another high-risk group. If pregnant women contract COVID-19, they are at high risk of developing serious complications and even have a higher chance of death. At the same time, it will also hurt the fetus, which can lead to serious consequences e.g. poor fetal growth, stillbirth, miscarriage, and premature birth. All women who are planning for pregnancy should receive the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

Pregnant women who have not received prior vaccination against COVID-19 can receive COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy. Scientific data from around the world have shown that use of either the mRNA vaccine (Comirnaty/BioNtech vaccine in Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR) or Inactivated virus vaccines (CoronaVac/SinoVac vaccine in Hong Kong SAR; SinoPharm vaccine in Macau SAR) vaccination during pregnancy is safe and effective. COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy not only reduces the risk of severe infection in pregnant women, but the antibodies produced after vaccination can also be transferred to the fetus through the placenta, protecting the fetus and the baby after birth from the serious complications and sequelae of COVID-19 infection.

We highly recommend pregnant women who received the COVID-19 vaccination to breastfeed and breastfeeding women to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This will cause no harm to the baby, and the antibodies produced by mother can be transferred to the baby through breastfeeding and protects the newborn baby against severe illness and complications from COVID-19 infection. However, We should understand that protective levels of antibodies can only be achieved 14 days after COVID-19 vaccination, so pregnant women should consider receiving the COVID-19 vaccine without delay.

Sometimes people may have misunderstandings that the messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) and other components in the COVID-19 vaccine will pass from the placenta to the fetus or from breast milk to the infant. The exact answer is "absolutely no"! Pregnant and breastfeeding women may experience mild reactions after COVID-19 vaccination, which are no different from other adults. There is no need to worry about any serious reactions after vaccination.

The Hong Kong Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Paediatric Society, the Macau Pediatric Society, the College of Nursing Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Midwives Association, The Hong Kong Society for Paediatric Immunology Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the Hong Kong College of Paediatric Nursing and the Hong Kong Paediatric Nurses Association would like to issue a joint statement here, appealing to pregnant and breastfeeding women to receive COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible to prevent severe illnesses and to protect their babies in the womb and to reduce the risk of infection in infants after birth.

9th September 2022

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