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# Pregnant Women More Likely to Experience Severe Cases of Covid-19, CDC Says

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Kyle Murphy **September 21, 2021**

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Pregnant women are disproportionately being affected by serious Covid-19 cases that may require hospitalization or lead to death, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is encouraging vaccination as the benefits thereof outweigh any potential risks.

That's according to Dr. Shana Godfred-Cato, CDC medical officer and pediatrician, who spoke to the Consortium during a Zoom interview Monday. "Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to be hospitalized, require critical care, including ventilation and admission to the Intensive Care Unit or develop illness that results in death," she said. "Also, Covid-19 during pregnancy can increase the risk for preterm birth of the infant."

She said pregnancy does increase the risk for severe illness and death from Covid-19, and that there was no evidence that the vaccines affect fertility or cause complications in mothers or infants. "We highly encourage pregnant women or those thinking about becoming pregnant to get vaccinated for safety because the benefits outweigh any known or potential risk," she said.

Though data on the findings was still being studied and collected, Dr. Godfred-Cato said there were about 1,000 pregnant women Covid-19 cases per week reported to the CDC in July and August, compared to about 500 in June. She said 19 pregnant women died of the virus in August, making it the highest month recorded by the CDC. "That's why we really are encouraging vaccination for this population more urgently now than in the past," she said.

Dr. Godfred-Cato said pregnant women can receive monoclonal antibodies, "but vaccination is still the recommended choice to prevent severe illness from Covid-19, along with other preventative, everyday measures."

While she could not immediately provide data relative to the increase of miscarriage by people infected with the virus, Dr. Godfred-Cato stated, "Certainly illness can lead to miscarriage, so that would depend on how sick the mother is. We have seen death of the infant with active Covid-19 infection."

She said there have been studies done on women who got vaccinated late in their pregnancy and an analysis on women who were inoculated less than 20 weeks into their pregnancy. For those women, "there is no data to suggest an increased risk of miscarriage," she said.

Asked whether being vaccinated affects the chances of pregnancy, Dr. Godfred-Cato stated, "There's no evidence to show that there is any decrease in chances of becoming pregnant or carrying that pregnancy to term."

The studies Dr. Godfred-Cato referenced focused on groups of women who chose to become vaccinated, those who were recently infected with Covid-19, those who did not become infected with Covid-19, and those who received the vaccine and fertility appeared to be the same." More studies on pregnant women were underway.

Dr. Godfred-Cato said the CDC has been collecting data from the very beginning. "We have been collecting data on all women that are vaccinated during pregnancy that we know about."