

HEALTH ADVISORY FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND RETURNING TO WORK

GENERAL ADVICE

- Pregnant women have the same risk as non-pregnant women of getting COVID-19 infection.
- However, pregnant women may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant women, particularly in the third trimester (28 weeks and beyond).
- Even though COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing infection, serious illness and death, they are NOT 100% effective.
- Some people who are fully vaccinated will still get COVID-19. This is called vaccine breakthrough infection.
- Fully vaccinated people with a vaccine breakthrough infection:
 - are less likely to develop serious illness than those who are unvaccinated.
 - tend to have less severe symptoms than those who are unvaccinated.
 - are much less likely to be hospitalised or die than those who are unvaccinated.
 - can be contagious.
- Social distancing to lessen the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus is particularly important for ALL pregnant women:
 - who are in the third trimester (28 weeks and beyond)

- with other medical conditions such as pre-existing diabetes and chronic hypertension.
- with risk factors such as maternal age 35 years or older and BMI 30 kg/m² or more.
- Fully vaccinated pregnant women should continue to take precautions including practising hand-hygiene, and wearing masks whenever they are indoors in public areas where risk of virus transmission is high e.g. shopping complexes; social gathering. This is very important especially with the emergence of variants.

RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

- Fully-vaccinated pregnant women returning to work must check with their employer whether a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is in place to ensure their safe return to work.
- A risk assessment using the checklist provided by Safety, Health and Environment National Authority (SHENA) should be done by employers to ensure the safety of all returning workers.
- Pregnant women in the third trimester, in particular those with risk factors, should be strongly considered for alternative work arrangements to minimise their exposure to contracting COVID-19 virus such as:
 - working from home (WFH)
 - working in areas with reduced contacts with the public
 - redeployed to suitable jobs that can be done from home

PARTIALLY-VACCINATED PREGNANT WOMEN

- Pregnant women who have not completed their COVID-19 vaccination course should postpone returning to work until at least two weeks after the second dose had been given.

UNVACCINATED PREGNANT WOMEN

- Unvaccinated pregnant women who are medically ineligible for all the vaccines should be considered for WFH option.
- Unvaccinated pregnant women due to vaccine hesitancy are strongly advised to get their vaccination as soon as possible as the benefits of vaccination outweigh known or potential risks. They should not return to work until they are fully-vaccinated.