

TO:

- DDG: Chief of Operations**
- CD: Metro Health Services**
- CD: Rural Health Services**
- CD: Strategy and Health Support**
- All District Directors**
- Director: HIA**
- Executive Director: City Health**

Circular H100/ 2021

COVID VACCINE PROJECT OFFICE: COVID VACCINATIONS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Data from multiple settings indicate that pregnant women are at increased risk of developing complications from COVID-19 infection, including adverse pregnancy outcomes, hospitalization and death.(1) Vaccination has been shown to offer a strong, protective immune response for mothers and additional benefits of immune transfer to the baby.(2)

Whilst there are currently limitations to safety data for COVID-19 vaccines [including the Comirnaty® (Pfizer) vaccine and the Janssen® (J&J) vaccine], particularly in the 1st trimester, preliminary data is promising.(3) This is in keeping with the results from animal studies that revealed no safety signals surrounding receiving the vaccine before or during pregnancy.(1)

The Western Cape Vaccine Expert Advisory Committee (EAC), recommends that COVID-19 vaccination be offered to all eligible pregnant women irrespective of gestation following their informed consent of the benefits, the possible risks and the limitations of current safety data. Women may choose to discuss their individual circumstances and personal risk factors with a healthcare professional to assist them in determining the balance of risk and benefit in their specific circumstance. Should they opt for vaccination, they should be given the choice whether to be vaccinated in the 1st trimester or wait until after 14 weeks gestation.



J O Arendse
Chief Director: Emergency & Clinical Services Support

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. COVID-19 Vaccines while Pregnant or Breastfeeding [homepage on the Internet]. 2021 [updated 2021 Jun 29; cited 2021 Jul 13]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>.
2. Gray KJ, Bordt EA, Atyeo C, Deriso E, Akinwunmi B, Young N, et al. Coronavirus disease 2019 vaccine response in pregnant and lactating women: a cohort study. *Am J Obstet Gynecol*. 2021.
3. Shimabukuro TT, Kim SY, Myers TR, Moro PL, Oduyebo T, Panagiotakopoulos L, et al. Preliminary Findings of mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine Safety in Pregnant Persons. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2021.