Breastfeeding Committee for Canada | Comité canadien pour l'allaitement

Breastfeeding Committee for Canada recommends breastfeeding women/persons can be offered a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine series as the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks. The COVID-19 mRNA vaccine series has a 95% efficacy for preventing serious disease for the adult population and common side effects are mild.

Breastfeeding women/persons should not stop breastfeeding after vaccination. Continuing to breastfeed is important to protect an unvaccinated infant against respiratory, gastrointestinal infections and other illnesses. Emerging research shows that lactating women/persons have antibodies in their milk after being vaccinated with COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. Experts do not expect the vaccine to be harmful to the infant as the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine does not enter the nucleus of the cell and is not a live vaccine.

Because breastfeeding women/persons were not included in the initial clinical trials for the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, health care providers should use shared decision-making when discussing vaccination. The discussion should include information on the protection conferred to women/persons by vaccination and to infants by continued breastfeeding. At the same time, it should address the lack of current evidence from clinical trials and emerging research that includes breastfeeding women/persons and their breastmilk.

More research is needed to further inform recommendations.

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