

# COVID-19 and pregnancies: What we know

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Amid the rapidly evolving global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that has already had profound effects on public health and medical infrastructure across the globe, many questions remain about its impact on child health. New research published in the *Journal of Clinical Virology* indicates that the vulnerability of neonates and children and their role in the spread of the virus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 [SARS-CoV-2]) should be included in preparedness and response plans.

According to lead author Kathleen M. Muldoon, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Anatomy at the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine at Midwestern University, the COVID-19 pandemic poses substantial and underappreciated risks to [pregnant women](#), and perinatal infections endanger pregnancy outcomes. "Studies to date suggest that the virus can be transmitted to the fetus in utero," Dr. Muldoon says. "Although the evidence for infection is under debate, the possible routes for infection are such that infection control measures are required to protect newborns."

The potential for neonatal infection with the COVID-19 virus demands intensive study, including how viral pathology may or may not affect

[breast milk](#) as the preferred method of infant nutrition, as well as the potential effects of vaccines on women of child-bearing age, unborn fetuses, and [newborn infants](#).

"We are presenting the state of knowledge acquired to date about potential risks of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to the fetus and newborn," continues Dr. Muldoon. "This research is timely because information regarding the potential routes of acquisition of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prenatal and perinatal setting is of a high [public health](#) priority. Vaccines targeting women of reproductive age, and in particular pregnant patients, should be evaluated in clinical trials and should include the endpoints of neonatal infection and disease."

**More information:** Kathleen M. Muldoon et al, SARS-CoV-2: Is it the Newest Spark in the TORCH?, *Journal of Clinical Virology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jcv.2020.104372](#)

Provided by Midwestern University

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