

Vaccine uptake among pregnant women increasing but inequalities persist

Nearly 6 in 10 women giving birth in January 2022 (59.5%) had received at least one dose of the vaccine, up from 53.7% in December 2021 and 48.7% in November 2021.

Over half (50.6%) had received 2 doses of the vaccine in January, up from 43.3% in December 2021 and 38.4% in November 2021.

The latest figures take the total number of pregnant women who received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine prior to delivery, between January 2021 and January 2022, to 125,365. In the same time period, 88,736 pregnant women received at least 2 doses and 14,378 women received 3 doses.

Despite the upward trend in the number of pregnant women coming forward, women of Black ethnicity and those living in the most deprived areas of England remain the least likely to be vaccinated.

Three in 10 (30.5%) of Black women had one or more doses of the vaccine by the time of delivery between November 2021 and January 2022, compared to 57.5% of White women.

Among pregnant women living in the most deprived areas of the country, 38.9% had received one or more doses of the vaccine by the time of delivery, compared to 71.1% in the least deprived areas.

Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, Deputy Director of the Immunisation and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Division at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said:

The number of pregnant women coming forward for their COVID-19 vaccine is increasing month by month, which is very encouraging.

We know that pregnant women are at higher risk of severe disease and the COVID vaccines provide high levels of protection against becoming seriously unwell and hospitalised.

However, disparities in uptake persist, with women from some ethnic groups and those living in the most deprived areas being the least likely to be vaccinated. It is vitally important that we continue to address these disparities.

We have extensive evidence from the UK and around the world supporting the safety of the currently recommended COVID vaccines for pregnant women.

We continue to encourage all pregnant women to come forward for vaccination to give themselves and their baby the best possible protection against severe complications from COVID-19.

Head of the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme, Steve Russell, said:

It is really positive that we are seeing an increasing number of pregnant women opt to get vaccinated in order to protect themselves and their child from any COVID-19 complications.

The NHS has been clear that getting protected is the best thing that you can do if you are pregnant, and whether your next dose is your first or fourth, the NHS vaccine programme offer is evergreen and you can come forward at any time, with local healthcare professionals happy to address any concerns you may have.