

Viki Male- Explainer on COVID19 vaccination, fertility, pregnancy and breastfeeding



Viki Male 
@VikiLovesFACS

Overview

Reference: 37

Location: Online

Target Group: Women
and breast-feeding
mothers

Initiative type:
Information and
education

Contact

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https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_wHIYX-tGkGBPwuax7N8BxZPR4PT_TCDm/view

Twitter:

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Top Tip

You can get a long way helping people to make an informed choice by identifying and sharing what research has been done, and making this information accessible.

Why is this important to us?

I am a lecturer in Reproductive Immunology at Imperial College London, and in December I started to notice a lot of misinformation and rumours about the COVID vaccine causing infertility or being unsafe for pregnant or breastfeeding women. One of my PhD students inquired whether this is something we should be concerned about. I realised that clear evidence-based information on this was needed urgently. If I found this information difficult to access and communicate, as someone with research skills and expertise in this area, others without such a background might struggle to make an informed choice. As a reproductive immunologist, I was uniquely positioned to address this misinformation and to use my research skills to parse this complex area.

What are we doing?

I started a twitter feed to address the misinformation around vaccine safety in pregnancy and fertility by disseminating research-based information.

I then started to develop an "Explainer" in January 2021 that collates all of this information- I realised that there is more evidence than most people realise or are aware of. I was doing this in my free time, updating the evidence resource each week and sharing it via twitter- at this point I was approached by several news outlets to speak about the COVID vaccine and fertility. As this is related to my area of research, my university and the British Society for Immunology invited me to give a video Q&A on the vaccine, fertility, pregnancy and breastfeeding. I also wrote an article for Nature Reviews Immunology, which meant that the information I had collated and reviewed on vaccine safety in pregnancy was further disseminated.

Who is involved?

It's mainly me involved in compiling the information- when people say "there's no evidence on this", what I do is use my research skills to identify and lay out the evidence on this topic.

What works for us?

As younger age groups are called to receive their vaccination, there may be more persuading to do, given that there's less benefit to them in terms of avoiding more severe illness, addressing specific worries they have about fertility may be crucial. Quantifying the impact of disseminating this information is difficult-anecdotally. Since sharing the Explainer, I've had a person a day emailing me to thank me for compiling the information as it's helped them to make an informed choice. The initial Twitter thread got several hundred retweets, which led to another 3,000 people following me to access this information. The Nature Reviews Immunology article has also been accessed 33,000 times!