Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: https://reachmd.com/programs/clinicians-roundtable/covid-19-risks-in-infants-the-case-for-maternal-vaccination/36414/

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COVID-19 Risks in Infants: The Case for Maternal Vaccination

Announcer:
Welcome to *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Flor Muñoz, who's an Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Infectious Diseases, and Molecular Virology and Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas. She'll be discussing the COVID-19 vaccine in maternal and pediatric populations. Here's Dr. Muñoz now.

Dr. Munoz:
So for COVID-19, we know that women who are pregnant have an increased risk for certain complications from COVID-19. But I think that what we're seeing more importantly right now is that infants under six months of age are not able to receive a vaccination, and they are totally dependent on the antibodies that they receive from their mother to have protection against severe disease associated with COVID-19. And certainly in the pediatric population, it is those babies under six months of age who have the highest risk of complications.

There's actually a lot of information regarding the safety and efficacy of the COVID vaccines in pregnancy. Many studies that were observational studies have yielded information on how women who are pregnant and who received the vaccine at different trimester gestation were actually able to tolerate, very well, the vaccine, with very low risk of fever or any other complications associated with the vaccine, and certainly no specific concerns in terms of any adverse effect of pregnancy outcomes. As a matter of fact, vaccinated women were less likely to have preterm births or other obstetric complications that could have occurred in the case of an infection with COVID-19. We also have data that has been generated from multiple observational studies and prospective studies that have shown that the infants of vaccinated mothers are not likely to have any adverse outcomes associated with the maternal vaccination, and as a matter of fact, it is the opposite. It is more likely that they will be protected, because there is indirect protection as the mother is not infected, and there is also a direct protection from the passage of antibodies from the mother to the baby through the placenta, as well as the breast milk, which has been another way that we know that the vaccine could work.

We also know that the decision of a mother to receive a vaccine during pregnancy is actually made even before they are pregnant, and the decision for the mother to have their infants vaccinated similarly is made either before they're pregnant or during pregnancy, so it is a good indicator when moms are willing to receive their recommended vaccines—one of them being COVID-19, but also influenza, Tdap, and more recently, RSV—that they will be also accepting vaccination for their babies. So I think that it is very important to keep in mind that having a discussion regarding maternal vaccination is going to be critical, not just for the mother to accept her vaccine, but also to discuss pediatric vaccination and establish a plan for the continuum of care between mother and infant disease prevention.

Announcer:
That was Dr. Flor Muñoz talking about the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations for pregnant women and children. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!