

# Pregnancy takes a back seat to vaccine

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**GEORGE TOWN:** Although R. Devaki and her husband planned to have a child, she will be putting the plan on hold for now.

The 31-year-old pharmacist said she had concerns about conceiving as the Covid-19 vaccine had not been tested on pregnant women.

"I am concerned as certain vaccines state that one should not conceive for a few months after the injection, but with the Covid-19 vaccine, such information is unavailable," she said.

"For me, the fear of getting Covid-19 is far greater than the need to conceive. As a frontliner, I will be taking the vaccine soon as I am exposed to people every day.

"Although my husband and I have been planning to have a child,

it would make more sense to get the vaccine first."

Paediatrician and international board-certified lactation consultant Datuk Dr Siti Khadijah Tun Hamdan said that due to misinformation or lack of information, many were worried about the possible side effects from the Covid-19 vaccine, and were postponing to conceive.

"Misinformation is the cause of worry when it comes to women and new parents. I know people are afraid to get pregnant if they get the vaccine as they fear birth abnormalities.

"As studies were not done on pregnant women, there is no information about how long one should wait before conceiving after getting the vaccine.

"At present, there is limited data about the safety of Covid-19 vaccines for people who are pregnant.

"The health authorities in the United Kingdom and United States have allowed vaccination for pregnant mothers if their risk is high for Covid-19 infection or if they understand the risks.

"Both the Singaporean and Malaysian health ministries have been conservative and are currently not recommending that pregnant women take the vaccine," she said.

Dr Siti Khadijah, however, advised breastfeeding women to get the vaccine.

"Studies have shown that there is no issue with breastfeeding after taking the vaccine. Based on research, it has shown that breast milk could help fight the virus.

"It is actually better for the baby as antibodies from the vaccine will be passed to the baby when they breastfeed.

"The Pfizer vaccine is a relatively

new technology but has been used in medical studies. Despite it being new, it has been used on a large scale.

"I would advise people to take the vaccine because it protects not only them but the people around them," she added.

On Tuesday, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said pregnant women and nursing mothers would not be given the shot based on a resolution of the Covid-19 Vaccine Supply Access Guarantee Special Committee.

He said as of now the committee maintained that such a group should not be given the vaccination.

Recently, Universiti Putra Malaysia microbiology lecturer Assoc Prof Dr Niazlin Mohd Taib also urged expecting women and nursing mothers to skip the jab to avoid possible side effects.