

16 July 2021

133 Molesworth
Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H202108431

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Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 12 July 2021 for:

“What information do you currently hold that says it is safe or that there are no additional safety concerns with giving COVID-19 vaccines to pregnant women at any stage of their pregnancy?”

Based on the results of this study and possibly other available information will the Covid-19 response be changed to advise pregnant women against being vaccinated for Covid-19 in the first 20 weeks of their pregnancy?”

While the Act enables people to request official information from the Ministry, it only applies to information it holds. There is no obligation to create information or compile information it does not hold in order to respond to requests, nor is the Ministry obliged to provide or prove an opinion.

This query appears to be an effort to engage in a debate about the merits of the Ministry's COVID-19 vaccine advice for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding and trying for a baby, rather than a request for official information. The Act does not support requests in which a requester quotes information and then seeks some form of comment on it, couched as a request for official information.

The Ministry does not conduct scientific studies or research. The latest COVID-19 research is available at: www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=covid-19+. Therefore, I am refusing your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

For your reference, the Ministry's COVID-19 vaccine advice for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding and trying for a baby as at 16 June 2021, is publicly available at: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-getting-vaccine/covid-19-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding-vaccine-advice.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nākū noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'N' followed by a horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Nick Allan
Manager OIA Services
Office of the Director-General