

Pregnancy During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

Frequently Asked Questions:

General Information



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Coronavirus disease, also known as Covid-19, has quickly become a worldwide pandemic. During this time, it is likely that pregnant women are feeling anxious or worried about how Covid-19 may affect them and their baby during their pregnancy journey.

This information sheet has been developed with the Midlands Maternity and Perinatal Mental Health Clinical Network and Maternity Voices Partnerships, to help support you with any concerns you may have during this uncertain time. It is important to remember to always follow the guidance and advice given to you by your health care professional.

Please be aware that some of the questions and answers below are informed by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website. For the full and most recent response please visit: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>

Q. I am pregnant, what should I do?

All pregnant women should follow the most recent government advice on coronavirus. As a precaution pregnant women have been classed as a vulnerable group.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

This advice includes staying two metres away from other people outside your household, including family, and avoiding anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus. It is still considered necessary for pregnant women to go out for essentials, such as food shopping, exercise and to attend antenatal appointments. If you cannot work from home, there is guidance available here:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/#occupational>

Q. Should I attend my antenatal and postnatal appointments?

It is really important that you continue to attend for your planned routine care when you are well. Maternity units are offering some appointments on the phone or by video link, when it is safe and appropriate to do so. This to avoid any travel unnecessary travel to the hospital.

Antenatal care is essential to support you in having a healthy pregnancy. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss with your maternity unit.

If you are concerned about your own or your baby's wellbeing, including the baby's movements, it remains vital that you seek advice and care from maternity services without delay.

Q. How can I stay safe during appointments, including scans?

Maternity units are doing everything they can to reduce the spread of coronavirus infection to healthy women and their babies.

You will be asked to come alone to appointments or keep the number of people with you to one (including midwifery visits in your home). This will include being asked not to bring your children with you to appointments. Understandably some women may find this difficult; the health care professionals at appointments will be there to support you and this will be reviewed on a regular basis in line with government guidance.

Your health care professional may be wearing a different type of personal protective equipment, such as a face mask or shields. Please do not be concerned by this. This is to reduce the spread of infection for everyone's safety.

If you or anyone in your household has symptoms of Covid-19, please contact your maternity team and they will arrange the right place and time to come for your visits. You should not attend a routine clinic, unless specific arrangements have been made.

Q. Will my choice of birth and/or birth plan be affected?

Maternity units are working hard during this time to support women and the choices available to them when giving birth. As ever, the priority for maternity services will be the

safety of yourself and your baby. Your midwife will discuss all the options available to you for your labour and birth.

If you have chosen to give birth at home or in a standalone midwife-led unit, it is worth noting that these services rely on the availability of ambulance services to provide rapid transfer to hospital, and the right number of staff to keep you safe. If these are not in place, it is possible that your service provider may not be able to offer these services.

Q. Will I be able to have my birth partner with me during my labour and birth?

You should be encouraged to have a birth partner present with you during labour and birth. Where possible, it might be worth considering a second person who could take the place of your birth partner if they became unwell.

As you can appreciate, if your birth partner has symptoms of coronavirus, they will not be allowed to go into the maternity suite, to safeguard the health of other women and babies, and the maternity staff supporting you.

Q. Will I be able to have my birth partner with me after I give birth on the postnatal ward?

Maternity and hospital settings must also follow the social distancing measures and prevent the spread of coronavirus. Visitor restrictions are in place across all hospital wards, including antenatal and postnatal wards.

It may be upsetting not have your birth partner with you on the postnatal ward, and staff will help you get home as soon as practicable after you have given birth. All staff will do their best to support you and help with the practical challenges of caring for newborns after birth.

Additional information is available from the Start4Life website. This may be a helpful source of information and provide guidance. This is regularly reviewed and updated:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/coronavirus-covid19-advice-during-pregnancy/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>