

COVID-19 Information for Our Pregnant Patients

As your prenatal care providers, we know the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak is creating significant anxiety for our pregnant patients. Please call your prenatal care provider or message the portal if you have specific questions related to your pregnancy. The following is some general information and resources and is accurate as of the date shown above. Please check the links for the most up-to-date recommendations, as guidelines can change rapidly. If you are reading this on paper, and you do not have internet access, you can call your prenatal care provider or the Rhode Island Department of Health info line at 401-222-8022.

The best links to check for the most up-to-date information are:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

<https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/>

Q: As a pregnant person, am I in a higher risk group for complications from the Coronavirus?

A: Data is limited regarding how COVID-19 impacts pregnant people compared to the general population. The most current data available indicates that pregnant people are at increased risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19. There may also be increased risk of pregnancy complications like preterm labor. Transmission of coronavirus to a fetus in utero appears to be unlikely, however one study of COVID-19 positive newborns could not rule this out as a possibility. The risk of transmission from mother to newborn appears to be very low if basic precautions are taken, such as mask wearing and frequent hand washing by the mother (never put a mask on an infant).

More information is here: [If You Are Pregnant, Breastfeeding, or Caring for Young Children | COVID-19](#)

Q: How should I limit my activities to protect myself during pregnancy?

Some of the CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health recommendations have stayed the same while other guidelines, such as the maximum number of people for social gatherings, change frequently based on how widespread the virus is at any given time. Recommended precautions include frequent hand washing, avoiding large crowds, **wearing a mask whenever you are with anyone you don't live with**, and keeping 6 feet of distance between yourself and people outside your household whenever possible. At the end of this document, you will find a more detailed list on how to protect yourself from infection. You can also check the RIDOH

website for the most up to date guidelines for social distancing at <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/> or call their hotline at 401-222-8022.

Q: I am pregnant and I have a new cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, runny or stuffy nose, or increased fatigue. What should I do?

A: Call your prenatal care provider for guidance before going to an emergency room or medical office. We have a dedicated team of doctors who answer all COVID-19 related calls, order testing when indicated, and see patients in person or advise to go to the ER.

Q: I don't have symptoms, but I have been exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive. What should I do?

A: "Close contact" is defined as within 6 feet of a person (even with a mask) for 15 minutes or more. If you have had close contact with a COVID positive person when they were symptomatic, or during the two days before they had their test swab done if they were asymptomatic, it is recommended you quarantine at home for 14 days from the last contact you had with that person. If the COVID-19 positive person lives with you, you should quarantine at home for 24 days from the time they developed symptoms or had a positive test. Contact your health care provider about testing options. If you hear from the Health Department contact tracing staff, follow their instructions. .

Q: I am a pregnant health care worker or other essential worker and cannot work from home. I am concerned about exposure to the coronavirus at work. What should I do?

A: For concerns about exposure in any type of workplace, please call your prenatal care provider for guidance. If your workplace presents significant risk of exposure, you may need to be medically excused from work temporarily.

Q: What can I expect when I go to Women & Infants Hospital to have my baby?

- All patients and support persons will be asked to **wear a mask while at the hospital**. If you are unable to bring one from home, a mask will be provided.
- Pregnant patients being admitted for birth **may or may not be tested for COVID-19 upon admission to Women & Infants**. Any patient with symptoms will be tested. Asymptomatic testing is sometimes done on all patients being admitted, depending on current guidelines and available testing supplies throughout the state.
- **Pregnant patients who are positive for COVID-19** will remain in the care of our practice unless severe illness requires transfer to maternal-fetal medicine specialists.
- **All patients, whether they test positive or negative, can have one support person** remain with them throughout their hospital stay. The support person must wear a mask and remain in the patient's room throughout the hospital stay. Meals are provided.

- Pregnant patients who are not having any symptoms, are not in quarantine for an exposure, and who test negative for COVID-19 (if asymptomatic testing is in place) may have a **pre-designated doula** in addition to their primary support person during their labor. The most up to date visitation guidelines are here: <https://www.carenewengland.org/coronavirus/visitation-restrictions.cfm>
- The available data suggests that the **risk of transmission of COVID-19 from mother to newborn is low when basic precautions are taken**, even when the newborn is “rooming-in” with the mother and is breastfed. If you are COVID-19 positive, discuss your decisions about rooming-in and newborn feeding with your pediatric provider. CDC guidelines regarding mother/baby contact can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/inpatient-obstetric-healthcare-guidance.html#anchor_1582067966715

To decrease your risk of infection with coronavirus, we recommend that you:

1. **Frequently wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, rubbing all surfaces. If soap and water are not available, use a **hand sanitizer** that contains at least 60% alcohol.
2. **Wear a mask** whenever you are with people you don't live with. Ask people you are with to wear a mask also. Avoid touching your face/eyes/mouth/nose
4. **Stay home** as much as possible. Work from home if you can. Contact your prenatal care provider if you have concerns about workplace exposure. **Follow current Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing. You can find the most up-to-date alerts and guidelines here: <https://health.ri.gov/covid/#alerts>**
5. **Wash your hands** after touching surfaces in public places.
6. **Avoid crowds**, especially indoors and in poorly ventilated spaces. Risk of transmission is much higher indoors than outdoors.
7. **Keep 6 feet of distance** between yourself and people you don't live with, in addition to wearing a mask.
8. **Avoid all non-essential travel** including by car, other ground transportation, or airplane.
9. **COVID-19 symptoms including new cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, runny or stuffy nose, or increased fatigue. If you feel that you are developing symptoms, call our office at 401-606-3000.**

For general information, please check the links above, which will be frequently updated, or call the Rhode Island Department of Health info line at 401-222-8022. For specific questions regarding your pregnancy, please call your prenatal care provider or message the portal. We are here to help during this stressful time.