Your health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear Patients,

We would like to take this opportunity to update you about your maternity care during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and assure you that our dedicated team of nurses and providers are committed to providing the safest and most effective care. We are taking every precaution to ensure that both our staff and patients are protected. While much is still being learned about COVID-19, the health and safety of our pregnant patients is and has always been our top priority. Every birth is unique and we will continue to ensure a safe environment for the most important moments in a mother's life. At this time, our policy is to allow a named visitor to be present for your child's birth, provided that they meet the hospital's health screening requirements. However, it's important that you stay in close contact with your healthcare provider, or contact the facility, as these policies may change due to unforeseen circumstances. Before you arrive at the hospital, we want to make you aware of a few additional precautionary steps we are taking at this time. For starters, we have a number of screening questions in place for all patients and visitors before entering the building. Again, this is precautionary and helps maintain the safety of all involved, and limits the spread of any potential infectious illnesses.

Here are the questions you may be asked:

~ Does the Patient/Visitor have a fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness, for example a cough or shortness of breath?

~ Has the Patient/Visitor had close contact with a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days?

We are dedicated to keeping you safe which is why we have implemented universal masking for all staff and providers in patient care areas. Our ability to socially distance when providing patient care is limited, so we are implementing these guidelines to protect both our patients and our staff. These new guidelines apply to all areas of our patient care facility. All of our staff members have been trained on hand hygiene and other infection control measures.

We ask patients and their named visitor to be particularly vigilant with respect to social distancing in the 14 days prior to admission. No children or additional visitors will be permitted. Any mother with a confirmed COVID-19 case or who is experiencing symptoms will be supported in taking all the possible precautions to avoid spreading the virus to her infant. To that end, we have created policies and procedures to help ensure that those who have remained unaffected are kept safe and well.

Rest assured that we have robust procedures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our hospital.

What to do when you go into labor?

If you think your labor has started, or if you need to go to the hospital due to an emergency or concern about the baby, know that we will be here to support you. We remain focused on providing you with outstanding care, and we have dedicated staff working hard to ensure you have a healthy and positive pregnancy and birth. Our first priority is providing you with safe and effective care, and we are committed to partnering with you in our efforts to care for you and your baby during this time. We know this experience may not be what you anticipated. But we will continue to go above and beyond to help you get the most out of this experience while adhering to the guidelines set in place to keep you and your baby safe and healthy. Thank you for trusting us with your care.
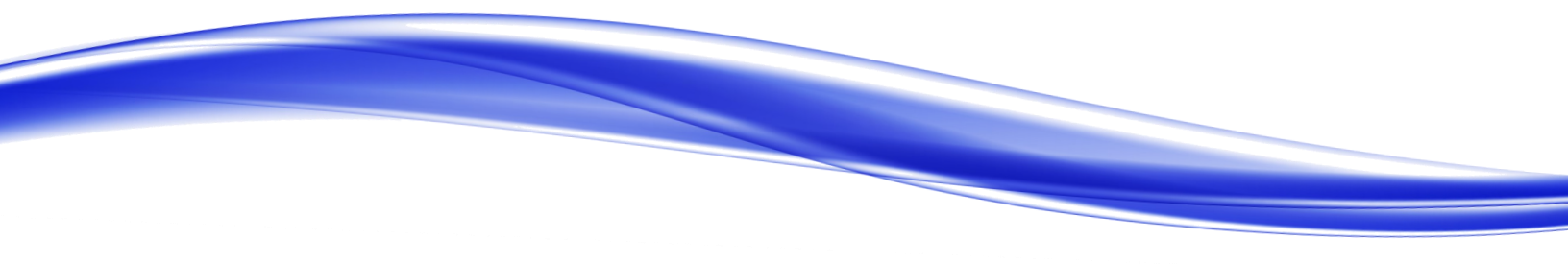
How will COVID-19 impact my delivery?

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Is it safe for me to come to the hospital to give birth?

Our hospital is the safest place to give birth. Extensive precautions are taken with every patient to prevent the spread of infection. Our staff are trained on how best to prevent infection, as well as to be able to provide the labor support and guidance you need during your child's birth. In addition, we are prepared to respond to any complications that may occur during labor and birth. We are taking every precaution to ensure that both our staff and patients are protected. While much is still being learned about COVID-19, the health and safety of our pregnant patients is and has always been our top priority. Every birth is unique and we will continue to ensure a safe environment for the most important moments in a mother's life. Before you arrive at the hospital, we want to make you aware of a few additional precautionary steps we are taking at this time. We have a number of screening questions in place for all patients and visitors before entering the building. Again, this is precautionary and helps maintain the safety of all involved, and limits the spread of any potential infectious illnesses. Refer to the facility website for further information.

How will my birth experience be different if I have tested positive for COVID-19?

If you are (or potentially could be) COVID-19 positive when you deliver, our facility will implement the latest CDC guidance to ensure you and your baby are safe. Know that the hospital is still the safest place for you to deliver your baby.

If I am scheduled for an elective induction and have a fever, can I still have my baby?

Contact your healthcare provider for guidance. Your safety is our top priority.

### Will I be able to have a support person with me during labor?

For the health and safety of all, we have restricted non-essential visitors. Laboring moms/new moms may still have one birth partner (aka your visitor) while you are in the hospital with us. It will need to be the same visitor the whole time you are with us. This is to prevent the number of people in and out of the rooms and exposure. For the safety of mom and baby, a support person may not be COVID-19 positive. All visitors are screened daily, and if any visitor screens POSITIVE for respiratory illness, he or she will not be allowed to enter the hospital. Therefore, if your birth partner has had known exposure to a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient and/or is showing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, please find another birth partner to join you on this journey.

Can I FaceTime during my labor or use another App?

We know this is an important experience to share with family. We encourage you to use your personal device and connect with loved ones not able to be with you in the hospital. If your support person is feeling under-the weather or you want a 2nd support person, you can FaceTime with them through your own device (no video).

I have other kids—what do I do about them when I am in the hospital?

Children are not allowed in the hospital at this time. It is important for you to make safe childcare plans for your children, as well as backup plans in case the person you had planned to watch your children gets sick.
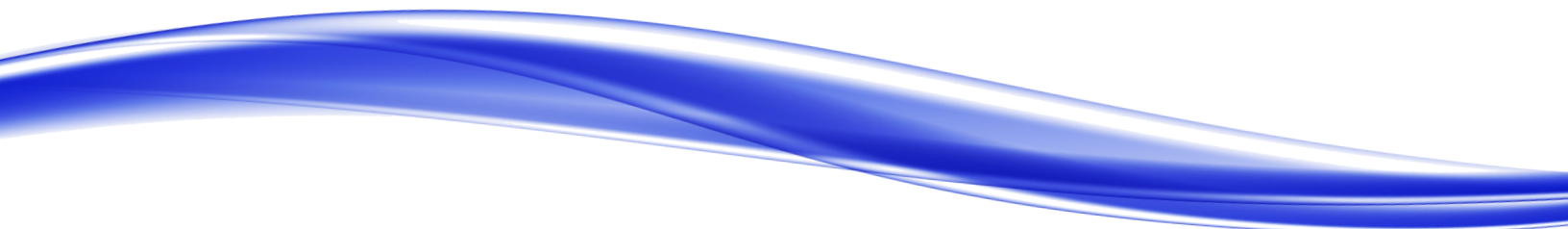
How does COVID-19 impact pregnant women?

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HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS
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Is it safe for me to come to the hospital to give birth?

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As a pregnant woman, should I be tested for COVID-19? Should my family be tested?

The CDC offers testing guidance for COVID-19 here:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/ testing.html.
If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call your healthcare provider right away.

As a pregnant woman, am I considered higher risk for COVID-19?

We do not currently know if pregnant women have a greater chance of getting sick from COVID-19 than the general public nor whether they are more likely to have serious illness as a result. Please reach out to your healthcare provider for definitive guidance.

What should I do if I'm pregnant and test positive for COVID-19?

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include:

•Trouble breathing

•Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

•New confusion or inability to arouse

•Bluish lips or face

This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your healthcare provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Can I pass COVID-19 to my baby during pregnancy?

We still do not know if a pregnant woman with COVID-19 can pass the virus that causes COVID-19 to her baby during pregnancy or delivery.

How can I protect myself and my unborn baby from COVID-19?

At this time, there's no vaccine for COVID-19, but there are ways to protect yourself and your family from exposure to the virus. Pregnant women should do the same things as the general public to avoid infection:

  - Stay home when you're sick and avoid people who are sick

  - Cover your cough (using your elbow is a good technique)

  - Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth

  - Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol

  - Clean and disinfect objects you touch regularly and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. Use hot, soapy water or a dishwasher to wash dishes and utensils.

  - Talk to your health care provider about your health and risk of COVID-19

You can find additional information on preventing COVID-19 disease at CDC's Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus: **www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html**

How does COVID-19 impact pregnant women?

Should I go to my next OB appointment, and will my experience be different in the midst of COVID-19?
It is very important to make your OB appointments. Please contact your OB to determine what that will look like. Telemedicine has made it possible to have virtual appointments; however, you will need to check with your own provider for direction.

Is it still safe to have an ultrasound?
Contact your delivery provider for specific advice on attending your ultrasound. If you do have an ultrasound, only the expecting mother will be allowed in for the appointment in an effort to decrease the potential spread of the virus. You may wish to ask for pictures to take home to show your family.

Does having COVID-19 increase the chance of birth defects or lead to higher birth complications?
We do not know at this time if COVID-19 would cause problems during pregnancy or affect the health of the baby after birth. A high fever in the first trimester can increase the chance of certain birth defects. If you get sick with COVID-19 or any other illness and develop a high fever, please speak with your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

Does having COVID-19 during pregnancy make it more likely for me to have a miscarriage or go into pre-term labor?
Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. Studies have not been done to see if having COVID-19 during pregnancy could increase the chance of miscarriage.

I am early in my pregnancy and was looking forward to a tour of the hospital.
Can I still participate in a tour?
In-person tours with individual patients or groups of patients have been cancelled to minimize exposure to our patients, visitors, and colleagues.
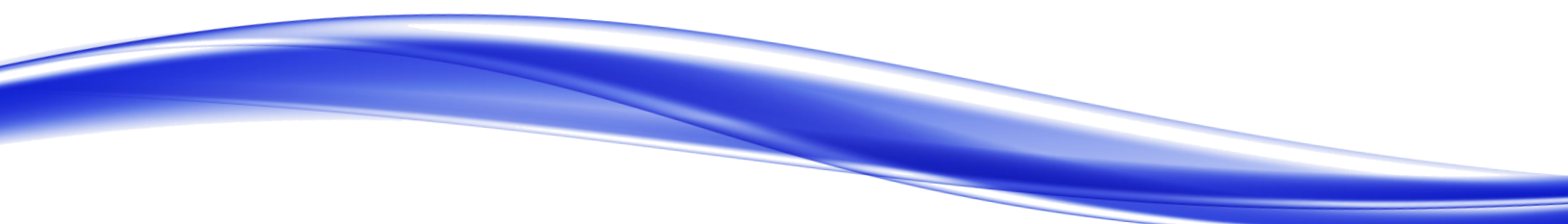
How will COVID-19 impact my baby?

How many visitors are allowed in the OB Department?
Given the uncertainty around COVID-19 and the rapidly changing environment, visitor policies are constantly changing. Please contact the OB Department for the most up-to-date visitation policies.

Can COVID-19 be transmitted through breast milk?
Currently, there is no evidence that COVID-19 transmits through breastmilk. Refer to and follow CDC guidance.
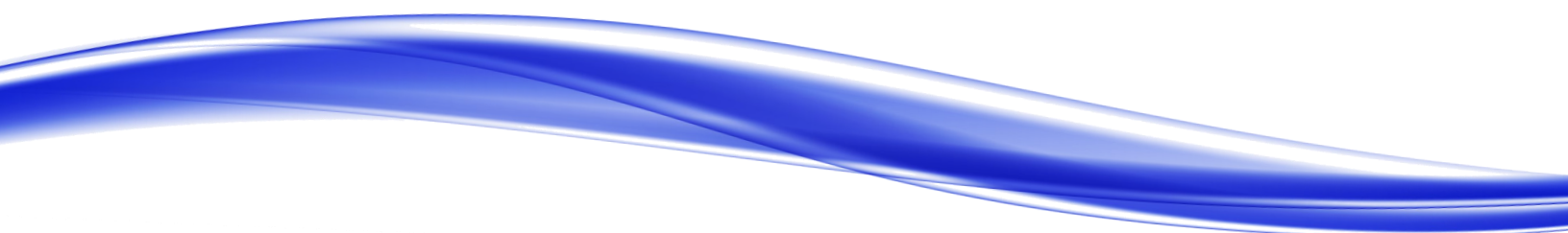
Once I return home, how can I protect my baby from COVID-19?
At this time, there's no vaccine for COVID-19, but there are ways to protect yourself and your baby from exposure to the virus. Once home, we encourage you to limit the number of visitors coming into the home and leverage technology to connect with loved ones (ex: FaceTime, Skype or Zoom).
To avoid infection:

- Stay home when you're sick and avoid people who are sick

- Cover your cough (using your elbow is a good technique)

- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol

- Clean and disinfect objects you touch regularly and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. Use hot, soapy water or a dishwasher to wash dishes and utensils.

- Talk to your health care provider about your health and risk of COVID-19

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Reducing your stress while pregnant, especially in the midst of COVID-19.

What can I do for my physical and mental wellness during pregnancy?
As information about Coronavirus unfolds, there can be a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions. Get the facts. Stay informed with the latest health information per the CDC: **www.cdc.gov/**.
COVID-19 and pregnancy specific information may be found here:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html.

Keep things in perspective. Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you have control over.

Be mindful of your assumptions about others. Someone who has a cough or a fever does not necessarily have coronavirus. Self-awareness is important in not stigmatizing others in our community.

Stay healthy. Adopting healthy hygienic habits such as frequently washing your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available, and certainly after sneezing or before/after touching your face or a sick person. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Avoid contact with others who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

Maintain a healthy daily routine. Take a shower, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water and get a good night's sleep. Here are some ways to improve your perinatal mental health:
www.wholemamasclub.com/nutrition-perinatal-mental-health/

1. Start your day with protein

2. Nourish your brain with fish oil

3. Don't stop taking your prenatal supplement, especially if nursing

4. Supplement with additional vitamin D

5. Don't fear fat

6. Don't skip meals

7. Avoid "naked carbs"

8. Consider making a sugar shift

9. Support your gut

10. Consider food sensitivities/allergies

Keep connected. Talk to your partner, family and/or friends about how you're feeling. Maintaining social networks can help maintain a sense of normalcy and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.

I'm anxious about COVID-19, who can I talk to?
Know you are not alone. Staying connected with friends and family in a virtual way is important. Reach out, share your story and talk to other expecting and new moms online.
Use PSI Support Groups (**www.postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/**) and/or seek additional help. Individuals who feel overwhelming worry or anxiety are encouraged to talk to their obstetrician and may seek additional professional mental health support.