



Sandwell and West Birmingham

NHS Trust

Coronavirus (COVID 19) and Your Pregnancy

We want to make sure you and your baby are well during the coronavirus pandemic and we are committed to providing safe and personal maternity care. It is important that you have all the information you need to help you to make informed decisions about your maternity care.

General Information on Coronavirus

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways. It spreads via coughing and sneezing and from touching surfaces that have been contaminated and then transferring it to your mouth, nose or eyes –this is why it is recommended that you wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, use a tissue when you cough (and dispose of it and wash your hands) and avoid touching your face.

Social distancing

It is also recommended that you follow the social distancing guidelines – this means staying at home with only the people who live in your household and only going out to do the following:

- Shop for basic necessities for example food or medicines as infrequently as possible
- One form of exercise a day either alone or with members of you household
- Any medical need – including attending your antenatal appointments or maternity triage e.g. if you have reduced fetal movements
- Travelling for work purposes but only where you cannot work from home
- Try to maintain 2 metres distance from other people at all times.

Symptoms and what to do

Do not leave home if you have either:

- A high temperature (you feel hot to touch on your chest or back)
- A new continuous cough – coughing a lot for more than an hour or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours.

If your symptoms are mild please use NHS 111 online service <https://111.nhs.uk/> for information and advice. Only call 111 if you cannot access the online service.

If symptoms (other than the cough that can last for several weeks) persist beyond seven days or you start to have problems breathing please call 111.

Why pregnant women are in the vulnerable group

The Government has put pregnant women in the vulnerable group – based on current evidence we have pregnant women are still no more likely than other people to contract coronavirus but we do know that in a small number of women who are pregnant can alter how the body handles severe viral infections. It is expected the large majority of pregnant women who contract the virus will only have mild or moderate cold/flu like symptoms.

Self-isolation – to stop the spread of coronavirus

If you have any coronavirus symptoms or live with someone who does you should not leave your home – even for the reasons above. If you are the one who has the symptoms then you should stay at home for at least 7 days. If at the end of the 7 days you no symptoms (other than the cough that can persist for quite a while) you are allowed out but need to maintain the social distancing guidelines above. If someone else has the symptoms you need to self-isolate for 14 days.

If you have an appointment it is important that you contact the midwife or team looking after you to advise them you are self-isolating. They will assess each situation and decide if the appointment can safely be postponed.

For information about working during the coronavirus outbreak, including risk assessments in your work place, benefits and furlough, please go to <https://maternityaction.org.uk/covidmaternityfaqs/>.

Your care during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Please note that we are continually assessing the situation and the information in this leaflet is subject to change in accordance with this.

We are following updated guidelines from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists/Royal College of Midwives in order to help you have a safe pregnancy and birth.

Ensuring that you are supported and cared for safely remains our number one priority.

You will find that our staff are wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – this is to help protect them and you.

It is very important that if you have a face-to-face appointment you attend the appointment. If your appointment is by phone or video calling that you answer or follow the link to log in.

Early Pregnancy

If you have any concerns such as pelvic pain, cramping and/or bleeding please contact your GP or midwife for advice.

Antenatal Care: community appointments

If you have a face-to-face appointment planned and have symptoms of coronavirus or are self-isolating because a household member has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus please ring before attending the appointment for advice.

Our community midwives will undertake some of your appointments via telephone instead of face-to-face. Please ensure that we have the correct phone number for you. If the midwife feels that you do need to be seen face-to-face they will arrange an appointment for you. We

have moved some of our clinics into non-hospital venues to reduce the risk to you. You may be asked to attend Modality St. James GP centre in Handsworth, or Aston Villa or West Bromwich Albion Football Grounds. You will be triaged by phone before the appointment to determine whether or not you or household members have any coronavirus symptoms. You will need to attend alone to help us reduce the spread of the virus.

Antenatal Care: hospital appointments

If you have a face-to-face appointment planned and have symptoms of coronavirus or are self-isolating because a household member has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus please ring before attending the appointment for advice.

Appointments

You may find some of your appointments have been combined to minimize the number of times you need to attend hospital e.g. your booking bloods will be taken at your dating scan.

Some of your appointments with one of our doctors or midwives may be via a secure video consultation system called Visionable – you do not need a log in and will get a unique URL (website link) by email or text message before the appointment.

Ultrasound scans and screening tests will still be performed – please ensure that you arrive on time but do not attend early to minimize any possible waiting time. Unfortunately you will need to attend alone. Planned growth scans will now take place at 35 weeks.

Antenatal Day Assessment Unit

If you have an appointment and have symptoms of coronavirus or are self-isolating because a household member has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus please ring before attending the appointment for advice.

Maternity Triage

It is important that you continue to contact Maternity Triage with any concerns during the pregnancy such as reduced fetal movements and at the start of labour. Our Maternity unit has been split into COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 areas in order to help protect you, your baby and your family.

Please ring if you experience any of the following:

- Suspected labour
- You think your waters have broken
- Stomach pain in pregnancy
- Bleeding in pregnancy
- Reduced or changes to fetal movement
- Headaches
- Feel unwell
- Postnatal concerns

Please ring first before attending and you will be asked some questions about coronavirus symptoms and household members so that we can direct you to the correct place. You may be asked to wear mask while in triage to help reduce the risk of the virus spreading. Any one accompanying you will need to stay outside. If you are in labour you will be moved to our Delivery suite and your birth partner will be contacted so that they can attend.

Labour and Birth

Induction

If you are being induced your birth partner will not be able to stay with you. Once you are in labour and have been moved to Delivery Suite a birth partner will be contacted and can attend.

If you are due to be induced and have confirmed coronavirus, symptoms or are self-isolating due to a house hold member having symptoms it may be necessary to delay your induction but this will be decided on an individual basis after careful consideration.

Place of Birth

Our Serenity Birth Unit has been reopened for low risk births and you can still have water births. This will be kept under review and may change. You can still have a home birth if you are suitable and this is your wish as our Willow team are still providing this service for you. However if you have confirmed coronavirus infection, symptomatic or self-isolating this will not be possible.

Birth Partners

When you are in labour you can have a non-symptomatic birth partner with you (they cannot be in self-isolation) – you may like to think about who you could have as a second choice. The same birth partner needs to attend all the time – it is not possible to change birth partners.

If you have other children they will not be allowed in the delivery suite – if there is no one in home available to care for them then it is allowed for them to be cared for by another close family member or friend – but please do not ask someone who is vulnerable to the virus e.g. people over 70, pregnant themselves or have significant medical problems to do so. Ensure you have an alternative backup arranged just in case.

Planned Caesarean sections

If you have been booked in for a C-section, this may need to be re-arranged. If this is the case your care will be reviewed on an individual basis. If you have a planned Caesarean section and you go into labour you should contact triage and arrange to attend for an assessment as normal.

If you have coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating

If you have coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating we recommend that you have your baby in hospital as current guidance is that your baby's heartrate should be monitored closely during the labour with continuous monitoring (CTG machine). It is also not recommended that you have a water birth as it may make it more likely for the virus to be transmitted to the baby.

There is no evidence that suggests that you cannot give birth vaginally if you have suspected or confirmed coronavirus so your birth choices should be respected or followed as closely as possible. There is no evidence that suggests that you cannot have an epidural or spinal block or Entonox (gas and air).

If you and baby are well you will be encouraged to go home as soon as possible.

Inpatient Wards

Our antenatal and postnatal wards are not allowing visitors to reduce the spread of coronavirus. The staff and support workers are still there to support you. Both wards have technology available to enable you to stay in contact with your family and friends.

Once you have had your baby your birth partner will need to leave before you are moved to the postnatal ward.

Your Baby

Staying with baby and skin-to-skin

If you have been confirmed as having the virus or are symptomatic, you can still have skin-to-skin contact with your baby, if this is your choice and you and baby are well enough. You will stay together after you have given birth unless baby needs to go to the neonatal unit.

Feeding

If you have had a positive coronavirus test, have symptoms of coronavirus or are self-isolating you should still breastfeed if that is your choice.

The main risk of breastfeeding your baby is the close contact between you and your baby because if you cough or sneeze this would contain droplets infected with the virus.

Therefore whilst feeding the baby (either breast or bottle) the person doing this should wash their hands before touching the baby, breast pump or bottles or when sterilizing and making bottles up.

Newborn Screening

Our screening midwives are working closely with Public Health England to ensure that all new-born babies still have the Newborn Screening Tests.

Hearing screening

We will try and ensure that baby still has their hearing screening while in the hospital. If this is not possible you may get an appointment to take baby to Aston Villa Football ground for the test.

Registering the birth of the baby

The Registry Office is currently not registering births. You can temporarily apply for child benefit and universal credit without the birth certificate.

Community Postnatal Care

If you have face-to-face appointments planned and have symptoms of coronavirus or are self-isolating because a household member has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus please ring before attending the appointment for advice.

Even though you have had the baby you still need to maintain social distancing advice and therefore no one from outside the household should visit you and your baby.

Postnatal Clinics and Phone Calls

Community midwives will undertake some community postnatal care by telephone or by inviting you to attend a postnatal clinic at various venues. You will need to attend alone and bring your baby, any paperwork you have and the red book.

Home Visits

They are undertaking some limited home visits and will use protective equipment when they do. If the midwife is attending your home please ensure that she sees you and baby in a separate room to others in your household and that you have everything you need with you, this includes any notes you may have, the child's red book, and nappy changing equipment in order to reduce the need for you to leave the room.

Babies Needing Care in the Neonatal Unit

If your baby is admitted to the Neonatal Unit one parent is allowed to visit and we ask that person to bring food etc. with them (the staff will heat it up for you if need be) to minimise the number of times you enter and leave the unit. Please follow the instructions on washing your hands before entering and leaving the unit. We are using a new system called vCreate which is an NHS Trusted Secure Video Messaging service that enables the nursing team to send you short videos and photos of your baby, during those times when you're unable to be on the unit.

Sources of Advice and Contact details

SWBH Maternity coronavirus information line:

07811715002

Triage:

0121 507 4181

Community Midwives Office:

0121 507 3744

swbh.maternitycovid@nhs.net

We suggest that all women sign up for and log into the maternity notes portal either via the maternity notes app available from the App Store/Google Play (you can use the QR code below to search for the app) or online at <https://www.pregnotes.net/>. This will provide you with a copy of your maternity notes (useful if you have to visit another hospital) and access to many reputable sources of advice on pregnancy, birth and postnatal issues and questions. We would also encourage you to turn on push notifications if you have not already done so as this will allow us to send important updates if needed. If you do not have access or are having problems please email swbh.maternitynotes@nhs.net with your details.



For up-to-date advice from the Government please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

For up-to-date information about pregnancy and birth please go to <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>. Make sure you check regularly as information is updated.



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