



Frequently asked Questions for Expectant Mothers During COVID-19

What effect does COVID-19 have on pregnant women?

Based on the information we know to date:

- Pregnant women are NOT more likely than the general population to get COVID-19;
- Pregnant women are NOT more likely to get severely sick if they get COVID-19; and
- It is expected most pregnant women will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu-like symptoms.

What effect will COVID-19 have on my baby if I am diagnosed?

Based on the information we know to date and other respiratory viral infections (influenza, SARS, MERS), there may be an association with low birth weight and preterm birth in the case of severe maternal illness.

Hospital Visitor Restrictions

What are the visiting restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Please note our visiting policies are subject to change at any time. We will endeavor to keep you informed and ensure your healthcare team will take good care of you and your baby.

- Labouring mothers may have ONE designated alternate caregiver and paediatric patients ONE parent/designated alternate caregiver at a time. The visiting parent/designated alternate caregiver will be allowed to leave the hospital and can return again the following day.; there are NO visitors
- NO children under 16 years of age will be permitted unless they are the patient; and
- If you are returning for a point of care test such as a Bilirubin Test appointment with baby, please arrive with your baby in stroller as a partner/support person will not be permitted.

If I am scheduled to give birth at Bluewater Health and do not have COVID-19 or symptoms – can I have a support person/partner during labour?

The Maternal Infant Child unit views birth as a major life event and at this time we are allowing the following exceptions:

- ONE support person is permitted during your stay, who is NOT symptomatic and NOT COVID-19 positive. This also means the partner/support person must not have been in isolation with a COVID-19 person, or have any symptoms (a fever and/or cough, runny nose, sore throat, or any other respiratory symptoms). The ONE support person must be from the same household and must remain in the patient's room while maintaining physical distancing, for the entire duration.
- The support person will be allowed to leave the hospital and can return again the following day.

If I am COVID-19 positive or have symptoms, can I have a support person/partner during labour?

If you are COVID-19 positive, or have symptoms, one support person/partner from the same household without any symptoms/illness will be permitted to enter the hospital and stay with you for the entirety of your stay. Please let us know your COVID-19 status before you arrive so we can safely prepare for the birth of your baby.

What is the visiting policy in the Special Care Nursery?

For those visiting their infant in the Special Care Nursery, we can only permit ONE parent/designated alternate caregiver at a time. The visiting parent/designated alternate caregiver will be allowed to leave the hospital and can return again the following day.

Caregivers who enter or leave the hospital will be required to wear personal protective equipment (gown and mask) and ensure good hand hygiene when caring for their baby. When entering Bluewater Health you will be screened and given a mask. When arriving to the unit please ring for assistance to enter. Upon entry to the Special Care Nursery you will be required to wash your hands and a nurse will provide you a gown.

The ONE parent/designated alternate caregiver MUST NOT be COVID-19 positive or have any symptoms (a fever and/or cough, runny nose, sore throat, or any other respiratory symptoms). When mom delivers a baby and both parents are still in the hospital, parents are allowed to alternate (one parent at a time) for the duration of mom's stay.

We recognize how stressful this can be for new parents, and we will maintain frequent communication with you if you are not permitted to visit.

Prenatal Information**Can I still attend my antenatal (prenatal) appointments?**

You will be contacted the day before your appointment, screened over the phone, and given direction at that time.

- Regardless of whether you have symptoms, it is possible you will have fewer appointments based on new guidelines for prenatal care during COVID -19. This is to reduce the risk to you and your baby. You can be assured each pregnancy will be reviewed individually and that the safety of all of our patients is our priority.
- You will also be screened at the entrance of Bluewater Health.
- At this time, no one may accompany you during your appointment visit. The size of our waiting areas and assessment rooms make physical distancing challenging.
- If you require a support person, they will be asked to wait in their car or go home and come back. They will be contacted by cell phone during your appointment if needed.
- If you need your support person to help with accessibility, it MUST be approved by your doctor in advance.
- NO children under 16 years of age will be permitted unless they are the patient.

Birth and Postpartum Information**What happens when I come into the hospital for any obstetrical care?**

- When entering the hospital at Bluewater Health, you will be screened for symptoms.
 - If you are coming for a booked procedure, such as a Cesarean-section, you will receive a prescreening phone call and further directions.

- If you are over 20 weeks and arriving in labour, or have concerns such as bleeding or reduced fetal movement, you will also be screened at the hospital entrance and then proceed directly to Maternal Infant Child Triage on Level 3, Norman Building
- If you have symptoms of, or are confirmed for COVID-19:
 - You will be asked to wash your hands and put on a mask. You will be directed to the appropriate location for further assessment.
 - You will need to have a COVID-19 test done. Your booked procedure will NOT be cancelled but delayed until we have the test result so we can care for you safely.
- Your care team will wear gloves, gowns and face masks while providing your care.

Is the Indigenous Birthing Room available at this time?

The Indigenous Birthing Room at Bluewater Health and the next-largest birthing room on the unit, have been secured for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19; however, our other birthing rooms are available and we will continue to encourage and support cultural practices.

How will my baby be cared for in the hospital if I have suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

- Your baby will be tested during your stay using a nasal swab, and umbilical cord blood.
- If you are well, you will have a discussion with your physician or midwife so you can make an informed choice to decide if you want baby to stay in the room in with you.
- You will be provided information on how to care for your baby during this time.
- You will also be asked to wear a mask for all infant contact. Ensure you wash your hands frequently, but also before and after touching your baby.
- If you are unwell, or have made an informed choice to separate from your baby, your baby will be cared for by our excellent team of healthcare providers.
- If your baby is admitted to the Special Care Nursery and you are COVID-19 positive, you and your partner will not be allowed to enter the Special Care Nursery, in an effort to protect your baby as well as the other infants there.

Can I breastfeed and do “skin to skin” with my baby if I am COVID-19 positive and have made the informed choice to care for my baby?

- Keeping your baby “skin to skin” and breastfeeding is encouraged, but you will be asked to wear a mask at these times and during any infant care activities. If you are breastfeeding you will have to wash your hands, breasts and abdomen with warm soapy water prior to feeding.
- If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, you should wash your hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning after each use.
- If possible, consider having someone who is well care for and feed the expressed breast milk to your baby.

Returning to Hospital

If you have to return to hospital for further testing for you or your baby:

- If you are provided with a mask at discharge, please ensure you are wearing it before you come to the hospital for your follow-up appointment.
- If you are returning for a point of care test such as a Bilirubin Test appointment with baby, please arrive with your baby in stroller as a partner/visitor will not be permitted. At this time, no one can accompany you during your appointment visit. The size of our waiting areas and assessment rooms make physical distancing challenging.