

Suspected/Positive COVID-19: Labour and Birthing

What is COVID-19?

A new or novel strain of coronavirus was identified in late 2019, and has now spread across the globe. The World Health Organization has named this novel coronavirus COVID-19 and has declared the outbreak a pandemic. The healthcare team caring for you during your labour will be wearing a face mask, a gown and gloves to protect themselves and your baby.

Can COVID-19 Be Passed from a Pregnant Woman to the Fetus/Newborn?

We still do not know if a pregnant woman with COVID-19 can pass the virus to her fetus during pregnancy or baby during delivery. It is unknown whether newborns with COVID-19 are at increased risk for severe complications. It is a concern however that newborns who come in contact with respiratory secretions are at risk for contracting the virus. To reduce the risk of exposure to your baby the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention recommends temporary separation from your baby until your precautions are discontinued or until you are discharged.

Planning for the Arrival of Your Baby

Before your delivery occurs your doctor will have an informed discussion with you to discuss the risks and benefits of having your infant room in with you after delivery. If you choose to separate from your baby during your hospital stay, your baby will go to our well-baby nursery and be cared for by our professional staff. Unfortunately, as parents you would not be permitted to visit your baby in the well-baby nursery during your stay because of your symptoms and risk of exposure to others.

Feeding Your Baby

If you choose to room-in with your newborn and wish to feed your baby by breast, you must put on a face mask, wash your hands, breasts and abdomen with warm soap and water before each feeding. If you choose to formula feed your baby you should put on a mask and perform hand hygiene. If you have chosen to separate from your newborn and intend to breastfeed you will be provided a cup or bottle into which to express your breast milk to establish and maintain your milk supply. Prior to expressing you should wash your hands, breasts and abdomen with warm soap and water. This milk will then be fed to your baby by the nurse caring for them in our well-baby nursery. This would be the same if you choose to feed your baby formula.

Discharge from Hospital

You may be discharged home with your baby. We ask that you consider the following recommendations at home while caring for your newborn baby. Follow the same feeding guidelines as listed above. Consider keeping a distance between you and your baby of six feet or two meters when not caring for your infant. If no other healthy adult is present to care for your baby, your face mask should remain in place during all contact until your symptoms are gone.