



COVID-19

Infection and Pregnancy

Information for pregnant women and their families

Many pregnant women have expressed concerns, both for themselves and their babies, about the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their health. Novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus causing COVID-19 symptoms.

What effect does COVID-19 have on pregnant women?

Pregnant women do not appear to become more unwell if they develop coronavirus than the general population. It is expected the large majority of pregnant women will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu like symptoms.

There is no evidence that the virus can pass to your developing baby while you are pregnant. It is therefore considered unlikely that if you have the virus it will cause abnormalities in your baby or cause early pregnancy loss.

What can I do to reduce my risk of catching COVID-19?

The most important thing to do is to wash your hands regularly and effectively as soon as you come from public places to your home or workplace.

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus
- only travel on public transport if you need to
- work from home, if you can
- avoid social activities, such as going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas

- avoid events with large groups of people

What should I do if I think I may have been exposed to COVID-19?

If you are a patient at Women and Newborn Health Service, you should contact your midwife and if you are well enough, present to the nearest COVID-19 clinic if you have:

Travelled overseas or been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and have either

- a high temperature and/or
- shortness of breath, a persistent cough and/or a sore throat.

If you are in self-isolation and you have concerns about the wellbeing of your unborn baby contact King Edward Memorial Hospital on 6458 2222.

They will provide further advice, including whether you need to attend hospital. If you are not a patient at KEMH, contact your obstetric health care provider (ie, GP, midwife, Obstetrician).

Could I pass COVID-19 to my baby?

As this is a new virus, there is limited evidence about managing women with infection who have just given birth. However, there are no reports of women diagnosed with COVID-19 during the third trimester of pregnancy having passed the virus to their baby while in the womb.

There is no evidence that the virus passes into breastmilk. The benefits of breastfeeding your baby outweigh any small potential risks of the virus being transmitted through breastmilk.

Will having the COVID-19 affect how I give birth?

There is no evidence to suggest you cannot give birth vaginally or that you would be safer having a caesarean birth if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Your birth plan should be followed as closely as possible.

What is the travel advice if I am pregnant?

Currently, the Federal Government has upgraded its travel advice to a 'Level 4' for the entire world. Do not go overseas. Pregnant women are advised to avoid all non-essential travel.

What is the advice on vaccination?

At present there is no vaccine for COVID-19. However, we recommend that pregnant women are vaccinated against influenza and whooping cough.

Adapted from RCOG/RANZCOG website

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