

# COVID-19 Information for Pregnant Women

The information on COVID-19 is changing fast. We'll do our best to inform you of what you need to know.

## **We are still learning about the risks during pregnancy to both mom and baby. Thus far:**

- Pregnant women do not seem more likely to catch COVID-19. They may be more likely to get very sick from it, get admitted to the hospital or the intensive care unit, and need a breathing tube, but not more likely to die from the infection compared to others. It's always a good idea for pregnant women to try to avoid getting an infection since many viruses like influenza (the flu) can be worse in pregnancy. Pregnant women should follow the same rules to avoid infection as others (see below).
- There are no known birth defects related to COVID-19 infection during pregnancy. High fever itself during the first trimester may increase the risk of birth defects.
- An increase in problems, such as miscarriage, early labor, or distress in the baby, is probably only a concern if a mom is severely ill. Most pregnant women won't require delivery just because they become infected.
- Most studies of women with COVID-19 at the time of birth showed that their babies tested negative. There are a few reports of babies that tested positive soon after birth with some that seem to have caught it in the womb (vertical transmission). This risk seems to be very unusual. The rest of the babies caught it after birth. For this reason, mother and baby may need to be separated after birth to prevent infection of the infant if the woman is infected at the time of birth.
- A woman can breastfeed even if infected. This may actually help the baby fight infection if the mom follows certain instructions (see resources at the bottom).

## **The best way to avoid getting sick:**

- **Wash your hands** (for at least 20 seconds) or use hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day.
- Avoid interacting with people who are sick with a flu-like illness (fever >100.0°F, cough, shortness of breath).
- **Social distancing:** Avoid gatherings of groups of people. Stay at least 6 feet away from other people even if they don't have symptoms and wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth whenever you do go out. **This will continue to be important even as businesses start to reopen.**

**If you or someone living with you develops symptoms of COVID-19 or is exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, call the office (day or night) for advice about further evaluation and management:**

- Symptoms include fever >100.0°F, **new** cough, **new/worsening** shortness of breath, chills, muscle aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- **Whether for pregnancy-related issues or concern for COVID symptoms, please call your doctor's office prior to coming to the hospital or doctor's office** so we can prepare for your

arrival. To avoid others becoming ill, we'll need to safely bring you to a private area for testing. We can discuss if you need treatment based on your symptoms.

- **If you have a medical emergency, such as persistent and/or severe shortness of breath please get medical care right away.**

**Visitor Policy:** You can access the current visitor policies here:

[www.umassmemorial.org/coronavirus](http://www.umassmemorial.org/coronavirus). We'll change the rules back as soon as it's clear that the danger has passed. We appreciate your understanding.

Each birth is special. We want every mother, baby and family to be safe and healthy. Please be aware that all providers will be working together to care for you. If your own doctor/midwife or their partner can't be there, another doctor/midwife may manage your pregnancy, including delivering your baby and caring for you after birth.

### **Reliable COVID-19 Websites**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>
- BabyCenter, partnered with Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
[https://www.babycenter.com/0\\_pregnancy-and-the-coronavirus-covid-19-symptoms-social-dista\\_40006948.bc](https://www.babycenter.com/0_pregnancy-and-the-coronavirus-covid-19-symptoms-social-dista_40006948.bc)
- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists  
<https://www.acog.org/patient-resources/faqs/pregnancy/coronavirus-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- Worcester Division of Public Health  
<http://www.worcesterma.gov/coronavirus>
- UMass Memorial Health Care  
<https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/umass-memorial-health-care/patients-visitors/coronavirus-covid-19-news-and-information>