



COVID-19

Guidance for pregnant women and women who have recently given birth

1. Introduction

This guidance is for pregnant women in Guernsey. Please read this guidance carefully.

The following advice has been collated from a combination of available evidence, good practice and expert advice.

Please continue to refer to the online COVID-19 resources for Guernsey, <https://gov.gg/article/176715/COVID-19---Coronavirus>

This is an evolving situation and advice will change, please check with your midwife or obstetrician that you have the most up to date version of this document.

2. The virus

Novel coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) is a new strain of coronavirus causing COVID-19, first identified in Wuhan City, China. Other coronavirus infections include the common cold (HCoV 229E, NL63, OC43 and HKU1), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

3. What has changed with my care due to COVID-19

We are working closely with the Maternity Services to minimise the risk to our service users and the community. In doing this we have had to implement some changes to our services:

- All group sessions have been cancelled
- No children or partners should accompany you to your antenatal appointments, including your scan
- Only one birth partner is permitted per labouring woman
- Only one named postnatal visitor per service user is allowed on the ward



- You must inform your midwife if you are expecting a home visit and anyone in your home has influenza like symptoms, has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is awaiting the result of a COVID-19 test

4. Effect of COVID-19 on the mother / symptoms

There is no current evidence to suggest that pregnant women are more likely to contract the infection or to become severely unwell than the general population. The large majority of pregnant women who have COVID-19 will experience only mild or moderate cold / flu symptoms.

The three most commonly noted symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Persistent cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath

5. Effect of COVID-19 on the fetus

There is currently no data suggesting an increased risk of miscarriage or early pregnancy loss in relation to COVID-19. There is also no evidence that the virus can pass to your developing baby while you are pregnant (this is called vertical transmission). Two cases of possible vertical transmission have been reported. In both cases, it remains unclear whether transmission was prior to or soon after birth.

Expert opinion is that the fetus is unlikely to be exposed during pregnancy and therefore considered unlikely that if you have the virus it would cause abnormalities in your baby and none have been observed currently.

6. Social distancing

We are advising pregnant women to follow the social distancing guidance and take the usual health protection precautions that they would usually take during pregnancy. The latest social distancing guidance is available at www.gov.gg/covid19guidance

Women above 28 weeks gestation should be particularly attentive to social distancing and minimising contact with others. It is advised that all pregnant women over 28 weeks gestation should significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family, if possible and remain at home until they have given birth, except to attend medical appointments, including antenatal care and exceptional circumstances such as labour.



Pregnant women who can work from home should do so. If you work in a public-facing role that can be appropriately modified to minimise your exposure, this should be considered and discussed with your employer.

7. Pregnant women with heart disease

Women who are pregnant and have significant heart disease, either congenital or acquired, should take further precautions, described as shielding.

Shielding is a measure to protect extremely vulnerable people by minimising interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. This means that those who are extremely vulnerable should not leave their homes, and within their homes should minimise all non-essential contact with other members of their household. This is to protect those who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) from coming into contact with the virus.

If you think your situation fits this category please speak to your obstetrician to discuss this.

8. Routine Appointments

The Maternity Services will inform you if there are any changes in the provision of antenatal care. Your midwife may offer some of your appointments using electronic methods of communication.

If you are well

Attending antenatal and postnatal care when you are pregnant and have a new baby is essential to ensure the wellbeing of pregnant women and their babies, and we would urge all pregnant women who are well to attend their care as normal.

If you are NOT well or are in self-isolation

Pregnant women should not attend a routine appointment if they are unwell or in self-isolation, but should call their midwife and rearrange. However, if there is an urgent need for maternity assistance you should not wait until your symptoms have gone but instead call ahead and inform the team of any symptoms, relevant travel history, if you have been tested for COVID-19 and the result if you have it. We are currently working with our Maternity services to limit the risk to service users.

In an emergency, call 999 and inform them whether you are in self-isolation, any relevant travel history, if you have been tested for COVID-19 and the result if you have it.



9. What happens if I go into labour during my self-isolation period?

If you go into labour, you should call your maternity unit for advice, and inform them that you have suspected or confirmed coronavirus infection.

If you have mild symptoms, you will be encouraged to remain at home (self-isolating) in early labour, as per standard practice.

When you and your maternity team decide you need to attend the maternity unit, general recommendations about hospital attendance will apply:

- You will be advised to attend hospital via private transport where possible, or call 999 for advice, as appropriate
- Do NOT use a taxi or public transport if you have been diagnosed as having COVID-19 or are waiting results from a COVID-19 test

10. What is the advice if I am a healthcare worker and pregnant?

We understand that it must be an anxious time if you work in healthcare and you are pregnant. Latest guidance recommends that pregnant women under 28 weeks' gestation (in the first and second trimester of pregnancy) with no underlying health conditions, should follow the guidance on social distancing in the same way as the general population. Subject to taking social distancing precautions in the work environment, in the same way as other colleagues, pregnant women under 28 weeks gestation may continue to work as normal.

However pregnant women from 28 weeks' gestation (in the third trimester of pregnancy), and pregnant women with underlying health conditions, such as lung or heart disease, may experience more severe symptoms of the virus and are therefore advised to take a more precautionary approach and are strongly advised to follow social distancing advice.

For further support around this matter please contact your line manager and the Occupational Health team.

11. After birth

Wherever possible the mother and baby should not be separated any more than usual, even if the mother tests positive for coronavirus. Provided your baby is well and doesn't require care in the neonatal unit, you will be kept together after you have given birth.

If you have had a straightforward pregnancy and birth you will be encouraged to leave hospital as soon as it is safe for both you and your baby and postnatal support will be provided outside the hospital setting.



Current evidence supports breastfeeding, even if the mother has a COVID-19 infection as any potential risks are outweighed by the benefits. An individual assessment will be undertaken on each mother who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 to provide the correct support for that family.

12. Useful websites

- Royal college of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/>
- Royal College of Midwives: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/>
- States of Guernsey: <https://www.gov.gg/coronavirus>