

COVID-19 Information for Pregnant Women

The COVID-19 pandemic is a constantly-evolving situation. Information is rapidly changing and we will do our best to inform you of what you may need to know.

There is currently very limited information on what to expect regarding risk during pregnancy to both mom and baby. Thus far, the limited data suggests:

- Pregnant women may be at risk of more severe disease based on our experience with other respiratory viruses such as influenza. The limited data on COVID-19 suggests this may NOT be the case for this illness, though we should remain cautious until this is more clearly seen. At this time, it is unclear whether pregnant women are more likely to be infected compared to other adults.
- So far no definitive evidence of transmission to the baby has been demonstrated.
- No particular birth defects are known related to exposure during pregnancy, though thus far no studies have been published when exposure has been proven to have occurred during the first trimester of pregnancy. High fever itself during the first trimester may increase the risk of birth defects.
- An increase in pregnancy-specific problems such as miscarriage, preterm labor or distress in the baby is likely only a concern if a mom is severely ill. Most pregnant women will not require delivery just because they become infected.
- ***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.***
- The virus does not seem to cross into breastmilk, so a woman can breastfeed even if infected. This may actually help pass antibodies to the baby. This can be through careful expression of milk using a breast pump that can then be fed to the baby by a healthy caregiver. If a woman feeds her infant directly at the breast, precautions such as handwashing prior to the feed and wearing a mask can decrease the baby's risk.

The best way to avoid infection:

- WASH YOUR HANDS (for at least 20 seconds) or use hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day.
- Avoid interacting with people who are ill with a flu-like illness (fever >100.4 deg F, cough, shortness of breath). Maintaining a distance **of at least 6 feet** should minimize the risk.
- Limit crowds and gatherings of groups of people (social distancing)

IF YOU or a household contact DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS of COVID-19 infection OR has a known exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-1, CALL THE OFFICE (DAY OR NIGHT) for advice about further evaluation and management.

- Symptoms include fever >100.4 deg F (>38 deg C), **new** cough, **new/worsening** shortness of breath. We want to see you if you need to come in. We will need to make preparations for your arrival so we can safely transfer you to a private area for evaluation and avoid others becoming ill if you are infected with coronavirus. **PLEASE CALL PRIOR TO COMING TO THE HOSPITAL**

REMEMBER, it is still FLU season so we can discuss whether treatment for this is warranted based on your symptoms.

Please be aware that UMass Memorial has revised its visitation policy in response to this outbreak. Until further notice, you will be allowed **ONLY ONE HEALTHY VISITOR/SUPPORT PERSON** with you when you come to either your office/ultrasound appointments or to the hospital including during labor & delivery. Please know this is for the safety of all our patients and staff and will be lifted as soon as it is 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. During this pandemic, please be aware that all providers will be working together to care for you. If your own physician/nurse midwife or their partner cannot be present especially for reasons of health, another physician/nurse midwife may manage your pregnancy, including labor and delivery, as well as care after delivery.

For more information, PLEASE access information from **reliable** resources such as the CDC (Center for Disease Control) website - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnant-women-and-children.html>