



Frequently Asked Questions | COVID-19 and Pregnancy

We understand that our pregnant patients have a lot of questions and (understandably) more anxiety right now. We have done our best to answer the most common ones here. Please also read the information provided from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG); if you didn't get a printed copy during your visit, it is available on our website (links are also listed at the end of this handout). We are happy to answer any other questions you have at your appointment.

Is it safe to come to the office for care?

We're doing our best to help you stay healthy during your pregnancy. Many of your visits will be done by secure video chat. Sometimes we'll need to see you in person, but we are taking steps to do this as safely as possible. These include:

- Screening all patients, staff and providers for symptoms before entering the clinic. Symptomatic patients are cared for at a physically separate location to minimize the risk of spreading illness.
- Wearing masks during all patient contact and using other personal protective equipment, as appropriate.
- Requiring patients wear masks while they're in our offices. Please remember to wear a clean fabric mask from home to your visits. If you forget, we'll give you a disposable mask when you arrive.
- Not allowing partners, children or other guests to accompany patients to visits and scheduling about half as many in-person appointments as normal to provide for safe physical distancing.
- Increasing the frequency of sanitation measures in our office.

What if I develop COVID-19 symptoms?

If you develop symptoms or come into close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19, you will be tested. This follows the Oregon Health Authority's current guidance. It also helps us develop an appropriate care plan and

recommend extra steps you can take at home to help prevent the spread of illness. At this time, it doesn't appear that pregnant people have worse symptoms than the general public. And while more research is necessary, it also does not appear that COVID-19 passes to the fetus during pregnancy or labor and delivery.

Where will I give birth?

All of the hospitals in the Portland region are open. The steps we've taken in our community to limit the spread of disease and avoid overwhelming our hospitals are working. There is no reason to change your planned birth location just because of COVID-19; the hospitals in our region are safe.

If you are planning an un-medicated birth and want to discuss whether WHA's free-standing Midwifery Birth Center might be a good option for you, talk to your provider.

Will my partner be allowed at my birth?

All of the hospitals in the Portland region are currently allowing one healthy support person to be with patients during their hospital stay. Different support people will not be allowed to come and go—it must be the same person throughout your stay. Your support person must be at least 16 years old (at Providence hospitals) or 18 years old (at Legacy hospitals) and will be screened for symptoms before entering the hospital. Support people with symptoms will not



be allowed to accompany you into the hospital—so make sure they take extra care to stay healthy in the weeks leading up to your due date.

Talk with your care team and check the website of the hospital at which you plan to deliver for any changes in these guidelines in the weeks before your due date.

Will I be tested for COVID-19 before my due date? What about my partner?

If you have a planned C-section or labor induction, you will have a COVID-19 test within 72 hours of your scheduled admission. You will also be tested if you develop symptoms or come into close contact with someone known to have COVID-19. This is so your hospital care team knows what safety measures to take during your hospital stay, which may include transferring your care to another hospital designated to serve COVID-positive patients in labor and delivery (talk to your provider as your due date nears about the measures in place at your planned hospital).

At this time, we are not testing partners or other planned birth support people, but both you and your birth support person will be screened for symptoms before entering the hospital. You may be given a COVID-19 test. If you have symptoms when you go into labor, please call our office so we can help make the proper arrangements with the hospital before you arrive.

Will I have to wear a face mask during labor?

No. Your entire care team will wear masks and other personal protective equipment during your labor and birth. Your birth support person should wear a mask outside of your room and may be encouraged to wear it inside, as well. Your team will take extra precautions if you have or may have COVID-19.

Will I be separated from my baby?

If you have or are suspected of having COVID-19 when you give birth, you and your care team will decide together whether a temporary separation is the right thing to do, weighing your unique situation and the risks and benefits. Things you'll probably talk about include how sick you are, whether your infant appears to have any symptoms, results of your COVID testing and your home situation.

Are COVID-19 patients delivering in the same place as non-COVID patients?

The hospitals in our region take care to isolate patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from healthy patients, including during labor and delivery. As conditions evolve in our region, these isolation practices may change and may include transferring the care of COVID-positive laboring patients to another local facility designated for their care.

What about visitors at home after the baby is born?

We suggest talking with your pediatric provider about this and following their recommendations. We know family and friends are anxious to see and hold the baby, but the reality is some people may be contagious without having any symptoms of COVID-19. Take this opportunity to enjoy time with your new baby and consider using FaceTime, Google Hangouts or another internet video application to introduce them to loved ones.

Resources

- Coronavirus (COVID-19), Pregnancy and Breastfeeding (ACOG)
<https://bit.ly/ACOGEnglishCOVID-19FAQ>
- Pregnancy, Breastfeeding and Caring for Young Children (CDC)
<https://bit.ly/CDCPregnancyCOVID-19>