



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 fever, symptoms and exposure before entering the clinic. Symptomatic patients are cared for at a physically separate location to minimize the risk of spreading illness.
- Universal masking of staff, providers and patients while in WHA 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. Your mask should cover your mouth and nose completely and be left on at all times unless you're asked to remove it by one of our staff or providers.
- Not allowing partners, children or other guests to accompany patients to visits.
- Scheduling about half as many in-person appointments as normal.
- 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, we recommend you get 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 appears that

pregnant people may be more likely than non-pregnant people to have symptoms requiring hospitalization. And while newborns can get COVID-19, risks to the fetus during pregnancy appear to be rare.

Where will I give birth?

Cases in our region and throughout the state appear to have stabilized. All of the hospitals in the Portland metro area are open and taking all the precautions necessary to protect patients, providers and staff. There is no reason to change your planned birth location just because of COVID-19.

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. Your support person 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 and consider having a designated back-up.

Providence and Legacy may have some variations in their visitor policies, such as age restrictions and whether you can have different support people during your stay. Check the website of the hospital at which you plan to deliver for more specific



information and updates 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. 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.

During your prenatal care at WHA, you will likely be contacted to schedule a COVID-19 test several days before ultrasound appointments, also. This is because you will be in an enclosed area with a sonographer for an extended period of time and risk of transmission is greater. Testing is also recommended if you develop symptoms or come into close contact with someone known to have COVID-19.

Will I have to wear a face mask during labor?

When hospital staff or providers are in your room, your birth support person will be asked to wear a mask and you will be asked to wear one, when feasible. Anytime you or your support person are outside of your room, you will be required to wear a mask.

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. If 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>