

COVID – 19 & PREGNANCY

WHAT WE KNOW

- A new disease that we are continuing to learn about daily, though there is still so much uncertainty
- No evidence that women who are pregnant are at greater risk for the infection or experience more severe symptoms when ill
- No evidence that the virus is transmitted from mom to baby in pregnancy or during birth
- No evidence of birth defects due to mom being infected
- No evidence that the virus is transmitted through breastmilk

WHO TO CONTACT

- Concerned about symptoms
 1. Stay home – do not go to the emergency room or clinic
 2. Complete self-assessment test on AHS website
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
 3. Call HealthLink (811) for instructions and testing options
- Call your clinic for advice if you have concerns on whether to attend scheduled appointments

PROTECTION & PREVENTION

- As a precaution, follow government advice about social distancing; stay away from public places and avoid anyone who has symptoms suggestive of coronavirus; if you are in your 3rd trimester (more than 28 weeks pregnant) be particularly attentive to social distancing and minimizing contact with others
- Good hand hygiene – wash hands for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Social distancing – avoid:
 - Non-essential gatherings
 - Handshakes
 - Limit contact with people at higher risk like older adults and those in poor health
 - People who are sick
 - Work from home where possible; If you can't work from home and you work in a public-facing role that can be modified appropriately to minimise your exposure, this should be considered and discussed with your occupational health team or employer
 - Avoid gatherings with friends or family. Keep in touch using phone, internet & social media
- When coughing or sneezing:
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or a bend of your arm, not your hand
 - Dispose of any tissue you have used as soon as possible, in a lined waste basket and wash your hands afterwards
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Use approved disinfectants when cleaning hard, high touched surfaces

SHOULD I ATTEND MY PRENATAL APPOINTMENTS

- Attending prenatal and postnatal care when you are pregnant and have a new baby is really important to ensure the wellbeing of you and your baby

- If you are well, you should attend your prenatal appointments as normal
- If you have symptoms suggestive of coronavirus contact your maternity services and they will arrange the right place and time to come for your visits. You should not attend a routine clinic
- You will be asked to keep the number of people with you at appointments at a minimum. This will include being asked to not bring children with you to maternity appointments
- There may be a need to reduce the number of prenatal visits. This will be communicated with you. Do not reduce your number of visits without agreeing first with your maternity team

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE CORONAVIRUS OR HAVE BEEN EXPOSED

- If you are pregnant and have either a high temperature and/or a new, continuous cough, you should stay home for 10 days. Do not go to a Family Physician, pharmacy or hospital. You do not need to contact 811 to tell them you are staying at home. You do not need a test for coronavirus
- You should contact your maternity care provider to inform them that you have symptoms suggestive of coronavirus, particularly if you have any routine appointments in the next 10 days. You can complete the self-assessment test on the AHS website <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- Call 811 if you feel that you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 10 days. If you have concerns about the wellbeing of yourself or your unborn baby during your self-isolation period, contact your maternity team
- If you go into labor, call your maternity unit for advice and tell them that you have symptoms, or think you have been exposed to someone with symptoms; If you have tested positive and/or have symptoms, your maternity team will make the safest plan for delivery, with you, which may include transfer of care to a higher level care hospital

AFTER DELIVERY

- Provided you and your baby are well, you will stay together after you have given birth
- There is no evidence that the virus can be carried in breastmilk, so breastfeeding is still encouraged. The main risk of breastfeeding is close contact between you and your baby, so precautions are recommended
 - Wash your hands before touching your baby, breast pump or bottles
 - Try to avoid coughing or sneezing on your baby while feeding at the breast
 - Consider wearing a mask while breastfeeding, if available and you have symptoms present
 - Follow recommendations for pump cleaning after each
 - Consider asking someone who is well to feed your expressed milk to your baby
- If you have suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus at the time your baby is born, your baby will be tested too
- If you choose to feed your baby with formula or expressed milk, it is recommended that you follow strict adherence to preparation and handling guidelines <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guide/resources/infant-feeding/recommendations-preparation-handling-powdered-infant-formula-infant-feeding.html>

RESOURCES

Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Society of Obstetrician & Gynecologists of Canada.
American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology