

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Pregnancy

We know that everyone has been following the news about the worldwide spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and that there are many questions and concerns. **The information below reflects both the limited knowledge, expert opinions, and information for the CDC. Most advice for pregnant women is similar to the advice for the general population in the United States.**

***\*\* Information on COVID-19 is rapidly evolving, and this information could become outdated by the time you read it. For the most up to date information, please visit the CDC and MA Department of Public Health websites\*\****

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.Mass.gov](http://www.Mass.gov)

## **Are pregnant women more susceptible to infection or at increased risk for severe illness, morbidity, or mortality with COVID-19?**

Pregnant women are more susceptible to severe illness in outbreaks of other related coronavirus infections (SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV) as well as influenza. Limited data from China, however, do not show a greater risk for acquisition or severity of COVID-19 in pregnant women compared to other adults.

## **Can pregnant women pass COVID-19 to their fetus during pregnancy?**

In a small, published case series of pregnant women with COVID-19, the virus was not found in newborns or samples of amniotic fluid or breast milk. Although information is limited about intrauterine transmission for other coronaviruses (MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV), maternal to fetal transmission has not been reported for these infections either. Transmission of COVID-19 from mother to the newborn after birth, through infectious respiratory droplets, is a concern and there have been very few cases reported of newborns as young as a few days old with infection. To reduce the risk of this transmission, temporarily separating a mother who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 from her baby may be recommended by the health care team.

## **I am a pregnant healthcare worker, should I avoid caring for patients that are potentially infected with COVID-19?**

Pregnant healthcare personnel should follow their intuitions' policies and procedures, universal precautions, and be aware of all updated infection control guidelines for their health care facilities to keep themselves and others safe in the healthcare environment. "Information on COVID-19 in pregnancy is very limited, facilities may want to consider limiting exposure of pregnant health care providers to patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, especially during higher risk procedures(e.g. aerosol generating procedures) if feasible based on staffing availability." CDC 3/19/20

### **Should I avoid international travel?**

Yes. Any travel is **strongly discouraged** at this time.

### **Should I avoid domestic travel?**

Yes. Any travel is **strongly discouraged** at this time.

### **I was near someone that was coughing. Should I be tested for COVID-19?**

Testing is not indicated in this situation. The COVID-19 tests are currently only used for patients with symptoms and certain risk factors. Testing guidance is evolving rapidly and indications for testing will likely change in the coming days/weeks. If you have, fever(100F or greater), cough, sore throat, muscle aches, runny nose, lack of sense of smell, diarrhea/nausea please call our office to be triaged accordingly.

### **Should I avoid crowded places (i.e., the T, a restaurant, a concert)?**

Yes! You should only go out to get essential needs( ie grocery store). **Otherwise, all persons should only be in contact with those who live in their household.** If must go out and around others, stay at least 6 feet away and wear a facial covering. Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, and do not go out if you are feeling unwell(sore throat, runny nose, fever, cough, muscle aches, even if they are mild symptoms).

### **I have had a recent exposure to someone who recently is under investigation for COVID-19. I am not having any symptoms. Should I come to my appointment in the office?**

Please call the office (617-732-1510) ahead of your visit to discuss the particulars of your situation so we can guide you and best prepare for your visit. Our goal is to provide you with appropriate care as well as protect the health of our other patients and our staff.

### **I have had a recent exposure to someone who recently is under investigation for COVID-19. I have developed symptoms such as sore throat, cough, muscles aches and/ or fever. Should I come to my appointment in the office?**

Please call the office (617-732-1510) first to discuss your symptoms so we can guide you to the best place for you to receive care. Our goal is to provide you with appropriate care as well as protect the health of our staff and other patients.

### **If I develop symptoms of COVID-19 around the time of delivery, what can I do to protect my baby?**

Transmission from mother to the newborn after birth, via contact with infectious respiratory secretions, is a concern. To reduce the risk of this transmission, temporarily separating a mother who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 from her baby may be recommended by the health care team. **Because of this, we recommend any pregnant worker, including healthcare workers, stop in person work at 37 weeks to increase social distancing practices.**

If separation is recommended, this will be discussed in detail with you and your family at the hospital where you will have a chance to ask questions of both your OB provider and the baby's newborn team. Mothers can still express breast milk and this milk should be fed to the newborn by a healthy caregiver.

At this time, there are no recommendations to separate asymptomatic women from their babies even if there has been a possible COVID-19 exposure. However, these recommendations could change as guidelines are rapidly evolving and hopefully testing will become more widely available for exposed individuals.

### **If I develop COVID-19 will I still be able to breastfeed?**

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. Although much is unknown about COVID-19, limited data to date has not identified coronavirus in the breast milk. A mother with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should take all precautions to avoid spreading the virus to her infant, including washing her hands before touching the infant and wearing a face mask, if possible, while feeding at the breast. If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, you should wash your hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning after each use. If possible, the infant should be fed the expressed breast milk by a healthy care giver.

*This content was prepared by [Ilona Goldfarb, MD](#), for the MGH Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.*