

What is COVID -19?

A cluster of cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause were identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Initially a novel coronavirus was subsequently identified in samples taken from patients and renamed COVID-19. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses with some causing less severe disease such as the common cold and some more severe such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

How is it spread?

Although evidence is emerging daily information to date indicates that human –to human transmission is the way that it spreads between people. Those who are in close proximity to each other within 1 meter through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. It may also be possible that a person can become infected by touching the surfaces or objects that has the virus on it and then touching their mouths, noses and possibly their eyes but this is not the main way that the virus spreads. While the precise lifespan of COVID -19 on hard objects and surfaces has not been determined some experts have suggested it may survive upwards of 24 hours. You can reduce the chances of being infected by taking precautions.

Infection control measures are paramount in reducing transmission.

- Regularly wash your hands for 20 seconds in time to sing 2 versus of Happy Birthday. Hand sanitizing gel is not a substitute for thorough hand washing but it is useful if that is all that you have access to at the time.
- Maintain at least 1meter distance between yourself and anyone coughing or sneezing.
- Ensure you and those around you follow good respiratory hygiene cover your nose and mouth with tissue when you cough or sneeze and then dispose of the tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- Always carry tissues with you.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

The wearing of surgical masks outside of a hospital environment makes very little difference. They must be worn and removed correctly changed frequently and disposed of safely in order to be effective.

What are the implications for my pregnancy?

- There is no data available suggesting an increase in miscarriage or pregnancy loss in relation to COVID-19.
- There is no evidence of uterine infection with COVID-19 therefore at the present time it is considered unlikely that there will be congenital effects of the virus on the development of the fetus.
- There has only been one case identified in a small study where possible vertical transmission from Mother to baby has occurred and the expert opinion at this time is that the transmission was likely to have occurred after the baby was delivered. Samples taken from the amniotic fluid (fluid around the baby) cord blood, breast milk or throat swabs from the babies did not test positive to the virus.
- Pregnant women do not appear to be more susceptible to the consequences of infection with COVID -19 than any other members of the general public.

Could my symptoms be COVID -19?

The most common symptoms are

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Some people may also have

- Aches and pains
- Headaches

However, these symptoms do not necessarily mean that you have the virus as the symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common such as a cold or flu. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people will develop symptoms but don't feel unwell and about 80% of people will recover from the disease without requiring any special treatment. It is the elderly population and those with underlying medical conditions that are more likely to develop serious illness

What should I do if I am pregnant and develop symptoms?

If you develop symptoms and you think you may have been in contact with a suspected /confirmed case or if you have recently returned from an identified high risk area or you are very unwell and feel you may have contracted the virus.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND THE UNIT WITHOUT TELEPHONING FIRST.

Firstly, you should call the COVID -19 hotline 111 for advice they will advise you on how to proceed regarding your symptoms. They will ask you a number of questions so that they can decide the best course of action for you regarding testing. It

maybe that you will be advised to attend the hospitals designated testing area for the next course of action. They may advise self –isolation at home depending on your situation. If you have any pregnancy related concerns once the 111 team have completed their review and advised you on how to proceed your call will be transferred to the unit. We will then be able to provide additional information and support regarding your pregnancy. If you have been advised to self –isolate at home the 111 team will inform us and we will keep in regular contact with you by telephone for up- dates in order to plan care if there any developments in your pregnancy.

If you reside in Spain and you have booked for antenatal care and delivery in Gibraltar and you are advised to self –isolate or are suspected or confirmed as having COVID-19. It may be advisable for you to ensure that you are able to access maternity care at your point of residency.

What if I test positive and require additional care related to pregnancy and delivery?

If you test positive or are waiting for confirmation of results and you are at a stage in your pregnancy where you can self- isolate at home, this is what you will be advised to do. The incubation period to date is 14 days.

If you require a hospital admission for any pregnancy related condition you will be admitted to

a designated isolation area within the ward. We would politely ask that your partner and relatives follow a few simple rules in an effort to reduce the risk of transmission enabling us to provide safe care for you and your baby.

- **ONLY YOUR PARTNER WITH A NEGATIVE PCR WILL BE ABLE TO VISIT AND THEY WILL BE EXPECTED TO STAY FOR THE WHOLE OF THE VISITING TIME.**
- **THERE WILL BE NO ACCESS FOR ANY OTHER VISITORS**
- **VISITORS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO SIT IN THE WAITING AREA OUTSIDE THE UNIT WHEN YOU ARE IN LABOUR OR AT ANY OTHER TIME**

THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN ORDER TO MINIMISE THE FLOW OF ACTIVITY WITHIN THE UNIT IN AN EFFORT TO MINIMISE TRANSMISSION OF INFECTION AND KEEP YOU AND YOUR BABY SAFE

What happens after I deliver my baby and I have been diagnosed COVID -19 positive?

To date it is recommended that all babies born to COVID positive women are considered to be an individual under investigation. Your baby will require to be tested and this will be done by taking swabs. The current advice recommends offering you the choice regards to 'rooming in' with your baby.

If 'rooming in'

- Baby can stay in the room 2 meters from you with a screen dividing the cot.
- You can handle baby with a mask following thorough hand hygiene.
- You can breast feed with a mask following thorough hand hygiene.

If the baby is to be isolated

This guidance may change as knowledge evolves.

If you choose to breastfeed your baby, the following precautions are recommended:

- Wash your hands before touching your baby, breast pump or bottles
- Try and avoid coughing or sneezing on your baby while feeding at the breast;

- Wear a face mask while breastfeeding
- Follow recommendations for pump cleaning after each use
- Consider asking someone who is well to feed expressed breast milk to your baby.

If you choose to feed your baby with formula or expressed milk, it is recommended that you follow strict adherence to sterilisation guidelines.

For all women in the postnatal period in an effort to reduce transmission of COVID-19 we will be advising much shorter stays in the unit. If all is well you maybe discharge within a 6-24hour period following delivery.

As from Monday March 16th 2020 the Community midwife will be situated in the Children's Health Centre. All your antenatal appointments, and Post-natal follow ups will be relocated to this area.

References:

Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel (HCP) with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - This Interim Guidance was updated on 4 March 2020

RCOG COVID-19 Infection in pregnancy – Version 1 (In collaboration with RCM and RCPCCH)

For further information –

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancy-v2-20-03-13.pdf>

INFORMATION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN COVID -19 (CORONA VIRUS)

“Keeping your health at the centre of what we do”



MATERNITY UNIT
ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL

Contact telephone numbers:

Maternity unit 20072266 ext. 2126 / 2125

- COVID HELPLINE 111

Please note:

The Community Midwives and the Sonographer have been reallocated to the Child Health Centre commencing 16th March 2020...

- Sonographer - 20007278
- Clinic 5: Midwife - 20007351
- Clinic 6: Midwife - 20007257