

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Alameda County Public Health Department

### COVID-19 AND PREGNANCY

What is known about the novel Coronavirus (nCoV), the disease it causes (COVID-19), and how best to prevent infection is changing on an almost daily basis. This information sheet has been developed to provide you with the most accurate information related to pregnancy and delivery that we have to date.

#### Key Points about Pregnancy and COVID-19

1. It is not yet known if the virus that causes COVID-19 poses a risk during pregnancy. There have been a few reports of preterm birth in women who were infected, but it is not clear whether these cases were caused by the virus or by other causes.
2. Even though the risks of the virus during pregnancy are not fully understood, most women who have become sick during pregnancy so far have gone on to have babies that don't show any signs of harm.
3. Mothers who are infected with COVID-19 can breastfeed. If you are sick, you can take simple steps, so your baby doesn't become sick.
4. As with other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza and SARS, pregnant women who contract COVID-19 are at higher risk of contracting severe respiratory illness like pneumonia. **All pregnant women should protect themselves against COVID-19.**
5. COVID-19 testing availability for pregnant women varies. If you think you have symptoms of COVID-19, call your health care provider to see if you need to be tested.

#### How Can I Protect Myself Against COVID-19 During My Pregnancy?

Pregnant women should take the same precautions as other people to avoid COVID-19 during and after pregnancy, with a little extra care and attention.

1. Stay home:
  - Follow shelter in place orders: leave your home only for essential reasons such as medical appointments.
  - If you are an essential employee and must continue working, ask about teleworking.
  - Consider having food delivered to your home to avoid grocery lines or ask family or friends if they can bring food to you. If you are enrolled in WIC, you can receive your vouchers electronically without going into the office. Call your local WIC program for more information.
    - Alameda County WIC Eastmont 510-577-7058
    - Alameda County WIC Telegraph 510-595-6470
    - Alameda County WIC Program Hayward/Fremont 510-670-5061
2. Take extra care to protect yourself:
  - Wash your hands with soap and water; if not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve, completely covering your mouth and nose.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects such as door handles, light switches, cell phones.
  - When in public, keep at least **6 feet distance** between yourself and others.
  - Wear a cloth face mask to protect yourself when you must be in public for essential activities.
    - It is still important to maintain physical distance even with a cloth mask.
    - Wash your cloth face covering after each use.
    - Have a bag or bin to keep cloth masks in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle.
3. Follow other routine precautions during pregnancy:
  - Make sure you are up to date on your vaccinations, including the flu shot and TDAP for whooping cough.



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- Don't take antibiotics or remedies NOT prescribed or approved by your doctor.
- Don't smoke or vape; if you do vape, don't share vaping equipment with others.

### Special COVID-19 Concerns During Pregnancy

1. If you get sick with flu-like symptoms while pregnant:
  - Prepare in advance for this possibility. Make sure you'll be able to manage if you get sick.
  - Consult with your health care provider about symptoms of COVID-19 that you should watch for. These generally include fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
  - Ask your doctor what over-the-counter medications would be safest if you get sick, and then make sure to have those products on hand, along with tissues and anything else you'll need to be comfortable.
  - If you have fever, cough, or difficulty breathing:
    - Immediately call your medical provider. Do not go to the hospital or clinic unless your provider directs you to.
    - If your condition is life threatening, **call 911** or go to the nearest Emergency Department.
2. Prenatal care appointments and services:
  - Contact your medical provider to see if your prenatal check-ups are still taking place in-person or via telehealth (use of phone calls, video conferencing apps like Zoom/Skype/Facetime). Also ask whether childbirth classes are being held virtually.
  - If you must see your doctor in person, find out if there are any restrictions for you or your support person.
  - Routine ultrasounds may be postponed during this time. If you are scheduled for an ultrasound, contact your doctor to see if you can bring a support person.
  - You might be contacted by phone for a pre-screening to see if you or your support person have any COVID-19 symptoms. It's very important to be honest with your answers, even if your symptoms are mild.
  - If you are experiencing signs of preterm labor or other warning signs during pregnancy, call your provider right away. Do not go to the hospital without talking to your provider first.
3. Take screen shots of your medical records and your medication labels to have in your phone. It may be helpful to assign someone in your support group to help you keep track of all the new information coming your way.
4. It is normal to feel stress and anxiety about being pregnant and giving birth, especially now with COVID-19
  - You can also focus on the things you can control right now like eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising, de-stressing techniques like breathing exercises or walks. Reach out to family and friends for support.
  - If you are on antidepressants or other medication consult your doctor about any changes you want to make.

### CHILDBIRTH & COVID-19

**Hospital rules are changing quickly** as more information about COVID-19 is gathered and shared. For now, keep yourself informed by your doctor and trusted sources, and talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions.

#### Pre-Delivery and Delivery

1. Have important contact information ready. Share this information with your support person or caregiver.
2. Bring everything you need for the entire time you will be in the hospital. Your support person may not be allowed back into the delivery room once labor starts so pack clothes, food, all items you need.
3. Establish other plans in case the hospital or provider you planned to deliver with is not available.
4. Many hospitals are limiting the number of visitors and support persons, including doulas, that can be present with you.
  - Find out ahead of time what the hospital policies are.
  - Some hospitals are allowing the use of video conferencing during labor and delivery. Find out about your hospital's specific policy and whether you need to get your doctor's permission.



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5. What if I want to deliver at home instead?
  - Find out if you are a good candidate for homebirth. Only low-risk pregnant people and those who've had completely uncomplicated pregnancies are candidates.
  - Check with your provider about any regulations and let them know as soon as possible that you are considering a homebirth.
6. If you are infected with COVID-19 at the time of delivery, discuss plans for delivery with your provider. You should be able to proceed with whatever type of delivery (vaginal or c-section) was already planned. Your hospital may take extra precautions to keep you, your baby and the healthcare staff safe during the delivery.
  - Your provider team will also try to ensure that the baby stays safe while you recover.
  - This may mean having the baby in a separate room or taking extra precautions before holding the baby.

### Post Delivery

1. After you deliver It is critical to keep your postpartum healthcare appointments, even if they are virtual.
2. Continue to have support at home after you deliver but limit the number of people interacting with you and the baby at one time.
3. Everyone in your networks will likely want to see the new baby but it is important to continue to follow any shelter in place orders and limit contact with the baby to the people who live with you. If shelter in place orders are lifted, it will still be important to limit visitors coming into home and to make sure that everyone who does come to visit is healthy and observes handwashing precautions, especially if they want to hold the baby.
4. There are many other options to share and celebrate the birth of your baby! Use video and live chat, send group texts, or post pictures to your social media.
5. Be mindful that other children can have mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 so be aware of this when siblings and other children have contact with your newborn.
6. If there is a health emergency with your baby, seek emergency medical attention but call ahead of time so they know you are coming.

### Breastfeeding

1. Breast milk is the best and safest food you can give your baby and provides protection against many illnesses. The novel coronavirus hasn't been detected in amniotic fluid or breastmilk to date.
2. Talk to lactation consultants while in the hospital. Lactation consultants can help virtually too. Call:
  - Alameda Alliance for Health 510-747-4500
  - Highland General 510-437-5195
  - Blue Cross (Anthem) 800-224-0336
  - La Leche League East Bay 510-469-6009
3. If you are hospitalized and or if your baby is placed in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and separated from your baby, continue to pump or manually express breast milk.
  - Wash your hands before touching the pump and wear a mask. Follow **ALL** hospital instructions.
  - If you are ill, the expressed breast milk can be fed to the infant by a healthy person wearing a mask

### PLEASE CONTACT YOUR HOSPITAL TO BECOME AWARE OF THE MOST RECENT POLICIES FOR CHILDBIRTH AND DELIVERY

HOSPITAL	PHONE NUMBER	HOSPITAL	PHONE NUMBER
Alta Bates (Berkeley)	(510) 204-1572	Valley Care (Pleasanton)	(925) 416-3440
Highland General (Oakland)	(510) 437-4278	Washington (Fremont)	(510) 818-7424
St Rose (Hayward)	(510) 264-4031	Kaiser Oakland	(510) 752-9300
Eden (Castro Valley)	(510) 727-3046	Kaiser San Leandro	(510) 454-4267

