

Maternity care during the COVID-19 outbreak

Information for patients

Version 8 - October, 2021

This leaflet provides you with information regarding your maternity care during the COVID-19 outbreak

For general and regularly updated information we recommend you visit:

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

We understand that you will be worried about what COVID-19 means for you and your baby and we are doing all we can to keep you safe. We have reduced the number of face to face contacts you will need during your pregnancy, carrying out some as telephone consultations.

All staff wear personal protective equipment (apron, gloves, eye protection and face mask) when in close contact with you. When you arrive for your appointment we will ask you about your health and that of your household members. Please do not attend hospital if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Please phone us to discuss your well-being and plan of care. We may still wish to see you.

Antenatal Scans and Appointments

One adult is able to accompany you to all scans and antenatal appointments at Airedale Hospital; this should either be your partner or someone from your support bubble. They are also able to accompany you to any maternity assessment centre appointment and any attendances on labour ward. Some GP practices and community hubs do not permit an accompanying adult, please check with your community midwife prior to your appointment.

You and your support partner must have performed a lateral flow test before coming to all antenatal and maternity hospital related attendances. This is to help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. You will be asked if you have performed this test when you arrive at the unit.

Women coming to the labour ward will be offered a PCR test on arrival.

If you have a positive lateral flow test result, please arrange for a COVID-19 swab at your local testing centre and contact your named midwife or the antenatal administration team on the contact number on your letter or in this leaflet.

To order lateral flow test kits for use at home visit www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

You and your partner will be asked to wear a face covering when attending appointments, if you do not have one of your own masks will be available at the department entrance. This is to reduce the risks of any transmission of infection to you and to our staff, to enable to the continuation of all the services we provide. We thank you for your compliance with this.

Please remember that antenatal care is ESSENTIAL for the health of you and your baby so please keep all your appointments.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 when a face to face appointment is due, please telephone 01535 294212 so we can discuss a plan of care.

COVID-19 and Pregnancy

The majority of women who are exposed to the COVID-19 will experience only mild or moderate flu-like symptoms. However pregnant women are more likely to become seriously unwell when compared to non-pregnant women and have a higher risk of their baby being born prematurely if they develop COVID-19 in their third trimester (after 28 weeks of gestation).

The best way to protect you and your baby is to have the COVID-19 vaccination. We understand you may be anxious about having a vaccination during pregnancy however current evidence shows that the risks of complications as a result of COVID-19 infection are greater than any risks associated with the vaccine. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/2021-02-24-combined-info-sheet-and-decision-aid.pdf>

In addition, your midwife or doctor will be very happy to discuss vaccination with you.

Whilst many restrictions have been relaxed, due to the increased risks we advise you to continue to maintain social distancing wherever possible, particularly towards the end of pregnancy (after 28 weeks) and practice stringent hand hygiene.

Your employer should undertake a risk assessment with you regarding your pregnancy. If you work in healthcare or other public facing role, you are at increased risk of infection, and this should be taken into consideration.

Some women are at increased risk of complications with COVID-19 infection, these include:

- Black and minority ethnicity (BAME) groups
- Maternal age over 35
- Overweight or obese women
- Pre-existing comorbidities; particularly diabetes

If you fit into any of these categories we advise that you are particularly

stringent in social distancing guidance.

If you test positive for COVID-19 at any time during pregnancy, regardless of your risk factors, please inform your community midwife as we may advise additional surveillance for you.

For the most current advice, visit the NHS.Uk website
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/

Community Midwifery Appointments

You must have performed a lateral flow test before coming to all community antenatal appointments. This is to help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. You will be asked if you have performed this test when you arrive at your appointment.

If you have a positive lateral flow test result, please arrange for a COVID-19 swab at your local testing centre and contact your named midwife or the antenatal administration team on the contact number on your letter or in this leaflet.

To order lateral flow test kits for use at home visit www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

You will be asked to wear a face covering when attending appointments, if you do not have one of your own masks will be available at the department entrance. This is to reduce the risks of any transmission of infection to you and to our staff, to enable to the continuation of all the services we provide. We thank you for your compliance with this.

You can book appointments over the phone. Your community midwife will arrange a consultation with you and will take lots of information and provide advice and guidance. They will also discuss screening tests for you and your baby, and ask for your consent for the ones you choose. You will also been sent an email link by the booking office with screening tests information which it is important to look at before your first midwife consultation.

Following your telephone booking you will be invited to attend a face-to-face appointment with the midwife, where you will have your screening bloods taken if consented and an antenatal check including blood pressure, urine testing, height and weight measurements.

You will be invited to attend a dating scan around 12 weeks at Airedale Hospital.

You will be offered a 20 week fetal anomaly scan by letter, at Airedale Hospital or Keighley health centre.

At 16 weeks you will be offered a face to face appointment with the midwife

At 25 weeks you may be offered a telephone or face to face appointment

From 28 weeks onwards your appointments will be face to face

You may bring one adult with you to all hospital scans and appointments taking place at Airedale Hospital. Please note that all waiting areas have been risk assessed for the amount of people who can be there at any one time and your partner may be asked to wait outside until it is time for your appointment.

You will be asked to wear a face covering when attending appointments, if you do not have one of your own masks will be available at the department entrance. This is to reduce the risks of any transmission of infection to you and to our staff, to enable to the continuation of all the services we provide. We thank you for your compliance with this.

Hospital Appointments

If you are having shared care with an Obstetrician at the hospital you may need to attend your appointment - or you may receive a phone call from the Obstetrician.

Urgent Care

If your baby's pattern of movements changes or reduces in number, or you have any other concerns about your pregnancy, please call and speak to a Midwife promptly:

Maternity Assessment Centre:
Monday-Friday 8am – 7pm
01535 292410 / 01535 292120

Labour Ward:
24 hours
01535 292401 / 01535 292402

It is essential that you seek advice if you have any concerns.

If you or a household member is symptomatic of COVID-19 please do still telephone us for advice if you have concerns about your pregnancy, but please ensure you inform us of any symptoms you have so we can be prepared.

Parent Education Classes

We are running virtual classes that have been very popular and well received. If you would like to join the sessions please look at our website by searching Airedale Hospital Parent Education or by following this link:

<http://www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk/services/maternity-services/parent-education/>

Choose which sessions you would like to attend and follow the booking instructions on the page.

Care in Labour

On admission to hospital, we will ask to take a nose and throat swab from you to screen for COVID-19. This is called a PCR Test. It will help us plan your ongoing care. The results are usually available within 24 hours.

In labour when you are ready to come to hospital, please call in advance. The midwife will ask you about your labour and some additional questions about your wellbeing and that of your household members.

When attending labour ward, one birth partner can accompany you. They must not have symptoms of COVID-19. They will be asked to wear a clean facemask and will be expected to stay in the labour room with you as much as possible.

In addition to aprons, gloves eye protection and face masks, our team members wear additional protective clothing including gowns at some points in labour. We will continue to look after you with care and compassion and will do everything we can to respect your birth preferences.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 we will continue to provide you with the same level of care but may recommend different choices for your labour, for example an early epidural (to minimise need for general anaesthetic if emergency delivery is needed) or continuous electronic fetal monitoring.

Our birthing pool facilities are available for use.

If you have symptoms of or have confirmed COVID-19 infection, we will escalate any concerns about you or your baby extra early to reduce the risk of significant emergencies.

Induction of Labour

If you are booked to come into hospital for induction of labour on labour ward you will be asked to call at a designated date/time in advance. You will be given an appointment for a COVID-19 swab (PCR test) approximately 48 hours before planned admission.

On admission the midwife will ask you about your pregnancy and some additional questions about your wellbeing and that of your household.

Your birth partner will be able to join you once we are able to provide a side room for you. They will also be able to arrange a 3 hour visit per day whilst you are in a shared bay. We may advise birth partners to leave overnight should labour remain unestablished, so that they can rest and be more refreshed in order to provide support the following day. They will of course be able to return if things change overnight.

Planned Caesarean Sections

If you are booked to come into hospital for a planned caesarean section you will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days prior to the operation. You will be asked to attend at a designated date/time. You will also be required to attend a pre-operative assessment appointment and will be given an appointment for a COVID-19 swab. Your birth partner will be able to accompany you during your caesarean. On the morning of your caesarean they will be able to arrange a 3 hour visiting slot for the afternoon on the postnatal ward.

Birth at home

We are still able to offer a home birth service most of the time. Please speak to your midwife if you are considering a homebirth.

Maternity Ward

After giving birth, you will then be transferred to the Maternity Ward (Ward 21) for your ongoing care. Birth partners will be able to go to the ward with you and will be given up to an hour to assist you and your baby to settle into your room/bed space. 3 hour visiting slots on the postnatal ward will be arranged with you and your partner for the afternoon of your birth, and for subsequent days following, based on your individual needs. Visiting times are restricted and you will be offered a time slot each morning for visiting on that day. Partners will be asked to complete a form to ensure they have no COVID symptoms and for track and trace purposes.

You will be asked to wear a face mask whilst moving around on the ward. We ask that partners remain in the room/ bed space throughout the visit and that curtains remain closed around bed spaces. Please note there are no toilet facilities currently available for partners on the ward.

In the interests of patients and staff safety visiting times **MUST** be adhered to. Visiting on the ward remains restricted to one birthing partner only which must continue to be the same person. Children and other family members or friends must not visit. If you have any queries about this please speak to a member of the ward team.

We understand that this is an anxious time and being separated from your partner is particularly challenging and we will support you with an early discharge wherever possible. However we advise you to stay in hospital until you and your baby are ready for discharge.

When you get home

You and your support partner must have performed a lateral flow test each morning before a midwife is due to visit you at home. This is to help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. You will be asked if you have performed this test when you are visited.

If you or our support partner have a positive lateral flow test result please arrange for a COVID-19 swab at your local testing centre and contact your named midwife or the antenatal administration team on the contact number notes or in this leaflet.

First day home: Your community midwife will visit you on your first day at home and will then agree a plan of care for the rest of the postnatal period.

Postnatal Day 3: You will receive a phone call and feeding support will be offered.

Postnatal Day 5: You will be invited to attend a postnatal clinic so that baby can be weighed and the new-born blood spot screening test will be carried out. If this falls at the weekend, you may be asked to attend the clinic at the hospital.

Postnatal Day 10: Postnatal review in clinic. Your baby will be weighed and you may be discharged from Midwifery care to the care of the Health Visitor. If this falls at a weekend, it may wait until the following Monday.

You will be informed if you need any further appointments after this.

You may be able to have a person attend these appointments with you but this is dependent on the location. Please check in advance of your appointment.

If you have any concerns about yourself or your baby at any time please call your community midwife / maternity assessment centre / ward 21.

Registering the birth of your baby

Please check latest information regarding registering your baby's birth at: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/births-and-naming/register-a-birth/>

Airedale Maternity COVID-19 advice line

Tel: 01535 294212 / anhsft.maternitycovid@nhs.net

This advice service is for women receiving Airedale Maternity Care, and for staff working at Airedale Hospital, to answer any non-urgent questions relating to your pregnancy and your on-going care.

Remember: We are here for you throughout your pregnancy, even if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

Please attend essential appointments and call us to discuss your appointment if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

