

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Pregnancy and Childbirth

If you're pregnant or just had a baby, you likely have many questions about how COVID-19 could affect you and your child. Researchers are still learning more about how the virus affects pregnant women and their babies. Below is information to help you work with your healthcare team.

What are my risks of COVID-19 while pregnant?

Researchers don't know if pregnant women are more likely to get COVID-19. But pregnancy can cause changes to your immune system that can cause any viral illness to be more severe. You should take extra care to not get sick during this time. This includes:

- Wearing a face mask in public
- Washing your hands often
- Using hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available
- Staying at least 6 feet away from anyone not part of your household
- Staying away from anyone who is sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces every day
- Not traveling if it's not urgent

What are the risks to my baby?

Researchers don't exactly know yet what the risks are with COVID-19 for babies. These are some things they do know:

- High fever from any cause in the first trimester of pregnancy can raise the risk for some kinds of birth defects. Tell your healthcare provider if you have a fever. He or she will help you work to keep your fever down.
- There are only a few cases of babies found infected with COVID-19 within a few days of birth. But experts don't know if the babies picked up the virus while in the mother's womb, during childbirth, or just after.
- Preterm birth and low birth weight has happened in cases of other types of coronavirus, such as MERS, and SARS from 2003. But experts don't yet know if these are a risk with COVID-19.
- Miscarriage and stillbirth have also happened with MERS and earlier SARS. But experts don't yet know if these are a risk with COVID-19.

Is it safe to keep my healthcare appointments?

Yes, it is still safe to keep regular appointments with your provider. You will not be allowed to bring visitors with you to any appointment—not even your partner. Wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, and follow all instructions from the healthcare staff at the visit to protect yourself from the virus.

All Women's Health Center patients are being called in advance of their scheduled appointments to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms. If you are COVID-19 positive, have been exposed to COVID-19, or are experiencing any symptoms, you will be directed to receive care in a different location and may be seen in by a different Women's Health Center provider.

Is it safe to give birth at the hospital?

Logansport Memorial Hospital has taken a lot of safety steps to protect people from COVID-19. Talk with your OB/GYN about what has been put in place.

If you have COVID-19 and are in labor, call the Family Birth Center at (574) 753-1395 before you arrive. We will take steps to protect people around you from infection. You will need to wear a medical mask. You may be in a special room that helps prevent infections from spreading. Your baby may need to be in a separate room after birth. Ask the hospital what to expect if you are pregnant and have COVID-19.

No visitors will be allowed with you before, during, or after birth. This is important to reduce risk of infection to everyone in the hospital. Follow all healthcare staff instructions, including their instructions on how to prepare your home for when you and baby go home.

Is it safe to hold my baby or breastfeed?

The virus hasn't been found in the breastmilk of women with COVID-19. But the virus can spread through coughing, sneezing, and talking. If you have or may have COVID-19, wear a mask while holding your baby or breastfeeding. Wash your hands often when caring for your baby.

Your provider may advise you to pump breastmilk to be given to your child by your partner. Wash your hands before and after using the breast pump supplies. If you have COVID and want to breastfeed your baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best ways to protect your baby.

If you are pregnant and have COVID-19 symptoms, call your healthcare provider right away. For other questions about pregnancy and COVID-19, please call the Women's Health Center or the Family Birth Center.

Women's Health Center: **(574) 722-3566**
Family Birth Center: **(574) 753-1395**

How can I care for my baby (after discharge) if I am positive for COVID-19?

You will need to self-isolate to limit contact with your baby. You will need to wear a mask and wear clean clothes when holding or feeding your baby. You can pump breastmilk and store it to maintain your milk supply until you are no longer infectious, in 7 to 10 days. Or you can pump and have your partner use this milk to feed the baby.

What if someone in my home is sick with COVID-19 symptoms?

If your partner or another household member has COVID-19 symptoms, he or she should self-isolate. This means staying in one part of the household away from others. He or she should not share food, towels, sheets, or other personal items. Clean common-use surfaces often, such as doorknobs and counter tops. If your partner is sick and it's near your due date, ask your healthcare provider how best to manage when you go into labor. You may be given specific instructions.

Is it safe to have visitors see the baby, or help with baby care?

To be safe, it's best to limit visitors, especially people who have recently traveled. People who travel are at higher risk of carrying the virus. Only the closest, well family members should be in direct contact with the baby. Visitors should wear masks and keep at least 6 feet from you and the baby. It's also best to limit contact with people who are at higher risk for problems from COVID-19. This includes older adults and people with certain health conditions.

If a visitor is to hold the baby, they should wash their hands first. Wrap the baby in a blanket and then remove the blanket afterward. The visitor should then wash their hands. Visitors should not kiss or touch the baby's face. This does not apply to immediate family members living in your same household, unless they are sick. Other close family members should limit their contact with others and wash their hands before touching the baby.