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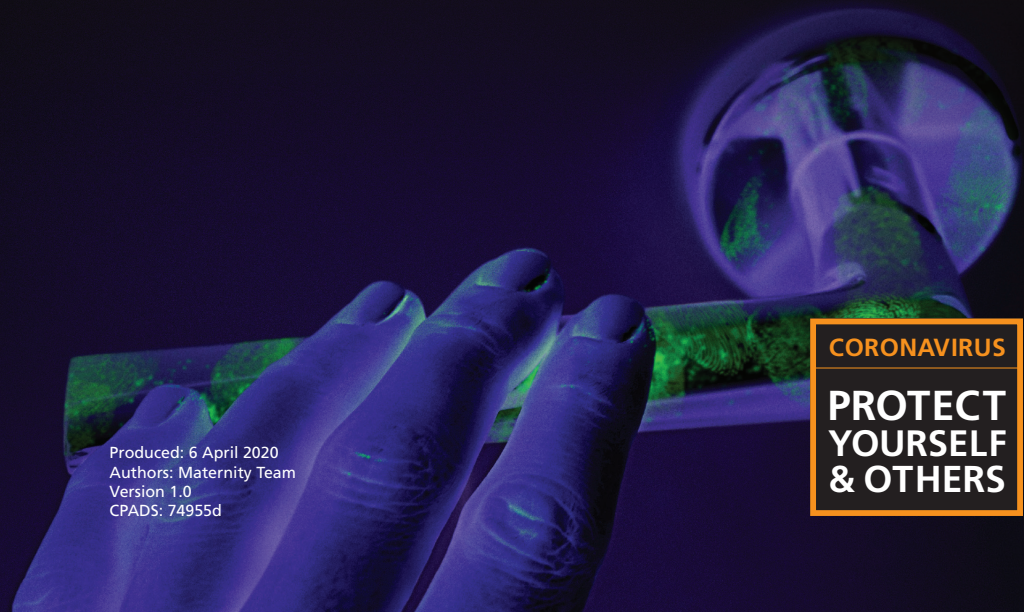
Information for pregnant  
women being cared for by  
Heartlands Hospital

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) and your pregnancy

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**CORONAVIRUS**

**PROTECT  
YOURSELF  
& OTHERS**



We understand that you will be worried about the impact of coronavirus on your pregnancy and your baby. This leaflet aims to provide you with information about coronavirus, your pregnancy care and changes we have made to maternity services during the coronavirus outbreak to keep you and your baby safe.

Ensuring that you are supported and cared for safely through pregnancy, birth and the period afterwards remains our number one priority.

## What is coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of coronavirus.

## How does coronavirus spread?

The most likely way to catch coronavirus is by picking it up from a surface that has been contaminated by someone with COVID-19 and then transferring it to your mouth, nose or eyes when you touch your face. This is why regular handwashing is so important.

In addition to these measures it is really important that you undertake the recommended social distancing measures to protect yourself, your baby and your wider family.



The virus is likely to be spreading rapidly due to the movements of people with no or very mild symptoms - namely, those who are unaware that they even have the virus.

Social distancing means staying home with only the people who live in your household and only going out to:

- Shop for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
- One form of exercise a day, for example a walk - alone or with members of your household
- Any medical need, including attending your antenatal appointments or maternity triage e.g. if you are experiencing reduced movements
- Travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home

## **Why are pregnant women in a vulnerable group?**

Based on the evidence we have so far, pregnant women are still no more likely to contract coronavirus than other people. However, what we do know is that pregnancy in a small number of women can alter how your body handles severe viral infections which is why pregnant women are classified as a vulnerable group. This is something that midwives and obstetricians have known for many years and are used to dealing with. As yet, there is no evidence that pregnant women who get coronavirus are more at risk of serious complications than any other healthy individuals.

## **How does coronavirus affect pregnant women?**

It is expected that the large majority of pregnant women will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu like symptoms.

## Symptoms and what to do

Do not leave your home if you have either:

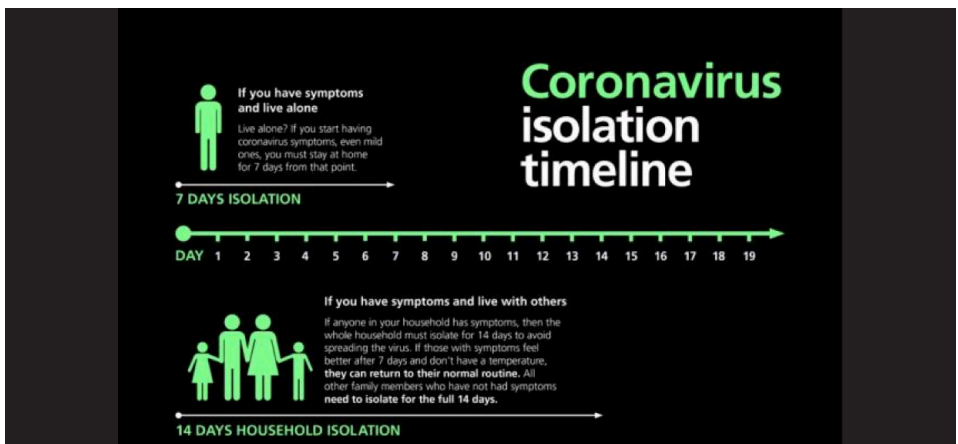
- a **high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a **new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

If your symptoms are mild please use the NHS 111 online service for further information and advice. **Only call 111 if you cannot access the online service.**

## Self-isolation helps stop coronavirus spreading

Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or live with someone who does.

This is called self-isolation. The isolation timetable shows you how long you must isolate for depending on whether it is you or someone you live with who has symptoms.



## **What to do if you are self-isolating and have a midwife or other maternity appointment?**

If you are due to attend an appointment with your community midwife or another team, it is important you contact them in advance to advise you are self-isolating due to you or a family member having symptoms.

Your handheld records has contact details for your community midwife and other departments.

## **How will my maternity care at Heartlands Hospital change?**

Ensuring that your pregnancy care is safe and in line with national guidance remains our number one priority. We have had to change the way we deliver some care because:

- Pregnant women have been identified as a group at risk from coronavirus. In view of this we want to reduce the chance of you being exposed to the virus when receiving care from us.
- There have been changes to staff available to work and extra demand for services in the hospital.

## **Antenatal care: community midwife and outpatient appointments**

To reduce the chance of you being exposed to the virus, and so you can follow government advice and stay home, we will be reducing hospital antenatal clinics and community clinics. Where we can, we will hold your appointment over the phone.

If you have an appointment scheduled and you no longer need to attend face to face, then we will contact you to let you know and provide you with a time for your telephone appointment.

**For telephone appointments, we will contact you by phone on the number we have on your file. Please ensure your midwife has your most up to date contact details.**

If we do not contact you to say your appointment has changed then it means we still need to see you in person, and you should attend as planned.

Some of the building we use for community clinics has closed so we may advise you of a new location, and we will try to keep this as close as possible.

For all appointments, both in community and hospital settings, please attend alone to help us reduce the spread of the virus. If you feel that you need additional support when attending the appointment, please contact us in advance. We are currently unable to offer a face to face interpreting service but are utilising technological alternatives.

## **Maternity Triage**

It is very important that you continue to contact our Maternity Triage with any concerns during your pregnancy and at the onset of labour. Our midwives will be able to redirect you to your GP or community midwife if they feel that this is a more appropriate route.

If you experience any of the following please call triage:

- Suspected labour

- You suspect your waters have broken
- Stomach pain in pregnancy
- Bleeding in pregnancy
- Reduced or changes to your baby's movements
- Headaches
- Feel unwell
- Postnatal concerns

The direct line to the Maternity Assessment area is **0121 424 3990**.

If we invite you in to be assessed in our Maternity Assessment area then you must inform us if you are suspected or confirmed as having coronavirus, even if you only have symptoms. This will enable the health professionals to wear the appropriate protective equipment when they meet you at the ambulance entrance. We will provide you with a surgical mask to wear for the duration of your time in the hospital. If someone else brings you to the hospital then we need to ask them to remain outside the hospital to help us reduce the risk of the virus spreading.

## During your labour

We will aim to adhere to your birthing preferences but we have had to make some changes that you will need to be aware of.

- Only one birth partner is allowed to accompany you during labour in the birthing areas only.
- Once you have been assessed in Triage, your birth partner will be contacted to join you in the Delivery Suite or Birth Centre.
- If you have suspected or confirmed coronavirus please attend Delivery Suite reception and clearly inform them of this when you arrive. Please attend on your own, if

your birthing partner is needed they can be contacted if necessary.

- The anaesthetic service is under great pressure at the moment and this may mean significant delays in providing epidurals for pain relief. If this happens we will offer you alternative methods of pain relief.
- After you have had your baby, when you are ready to be transferred to the ward your birth partner will be requested to return home.

## Induction of labour or planned caesarean birth

Due to increasing demands on our service at this time, there is a high probability that we will need to make changes to planned births at short notice. This may include attending on a different day to originally planned and we may not be able to give you much advance notice.

Birth partners are not permitted to be with you during the beginning of an induction of labour process. They will be contacted to join you in a labour or birthing area once it is confirmed your labour has started. We understand that this may be worrying for you, it is not a decision we have made easily but is a necessary step to reduce the risk of the virus spreading by limiting the number of people in these areas.

When you are admitted prior to a planned caesarean birth, your birth partner will be able to accompany you to the Elective Caesarean Section area.

Following all births, when you and your baby are ready to go to the ward, your birth partner will be requested to go home. As long as your caesarean birth is uncomplicated, you should be able to return home the following day.



## Postnatal Care following birth

If you and baby are well we aim to get you home as soon as possible, ideally within 6 hours, after we have completed newborn baby checks which we can do when your baby is 4 hours old.

Once you have been discharged one of our staff will escort you down to the front entrance where your partner can meet you to take you both home.

## Postnatal Care at home and in the community

Following discharge from hospital your community midwife will contact you by telephone on your first full day at home. During this call your midwife will talk to you about how you and your baby are doing, any concerns you have and make sure you know how to access any support you might need. Your midwife will also talk to you about your home visit on day 5.

**It's important that we have your up to date contact details when we discharge you. You should expect a call from us from 9am onwards.**

Your midwife will either invite you to a designated postnatal clinic or visit you at your home on day 5 to carry out neonatal screening checks.

If you are suspected or confirmed as having coronavirus. midwives will be wearing protective equipment and will visit you at the end of the day. All midwives will wear protective personal equipment for all patients now but if you have been tested positive for coronavirus, some tests may be delayed until it is safe to do so.

For all home appointments we request that the midwife sees you and the baby in a separate room to others in your household. It is helpful if you can ensure you have the things you need ready to change baby along with your red book, as this prevents you needing to go in and out of the room while the midwife is there.

Around day 10 - 12 your community midwife will contact you again by telephone to complete a wellbeing check for both you and baby and arrange for your baby to be weighed. They will also arrange for you to either attend the postnatal clinic to be discharged or a home visit depending on the circumstances.

Thank you for your patience and understanding at this challenging time.

## Contact details

**Maternity Assessment Area 0121 424 3990**

**Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

Please use this number at the onset of labour and for anything that is concerning you.

Delivery Suite: 0121 424 2710

COVID related enquires: 0121 424 2829 Monday to Friday  
9am-5pm

Women who experience reduced fetal movements:  
0121 424 1720

### **NHS.uk**

For advice on coronavirus and how to manage symptoms.

### **GOV.uk**

For the latest guidance on self-isolation and social distancing.

For general information about the coronavirus and pregnancy please visit the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/>

For our latest hospital updates visit our website [uhb.nhs.uk](http://uhb.nhs.uk) and follow us on social media:

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