

## Partners visiting after birth

Following the birth of your baby, you and your baby will be moved to a ward. Your birth partner as an 'essential visitor' will be able to visit you on the postnatal ward in all 5 protection levels although there may be some time restrictions to support physical distancing. Whilst we understand that this may be difficult, it's essential that we maintain physical distancing and limit the number of visitors to hospitals during this time to protect other pregnant women, their babies, and staff.

## Additional visitors within the maternity unit

In local levels 0-2; an additional designated visitor can also visit, subject to local risk assessments and physical distancing, provided they are not unwell or have any symptoms of coronavirus or have been advised to self-isolate. To find out if an additional visitor is allowed, please check your local visiting guidance or the Scottish Government national guidance on hospital visiting <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-hospital-visiting-guidance/>. If you are unsure what COVID restriction level you are in please access <https://www.gov.scot/check-local-covid-level/> for more information. Before visiting, your visitor should contact the clinical area to discuss appropriate arrangements and timings to support maintaining physical distance.

When you, your birth partner, or any visitor attend the hospital face coverings or any other PPE as indicated by the clinical team should be worn. Everyone must adhere to strict hand and respiratory hygiene by using alcohol based hand rub on entering and leaving the ward/department or following any patient contact, covering the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping or blowing the nose. These should be disposed of immediately in the bin and hand washing performed immediately afterwards. Physical distancing should be maintained during visits and visitors should not visit other patients or other clinical areas during their visit. Your visitor must not have symptoms of COVID-19 and must not attend if they are self-isolating for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or have recently returned from a country requiring quarantine.

## What about taking my baby home?

If you and your baby are well you will be discharged home as quickly as possible. Your postnatal care will be discussed with you when you are discharged, but be reassured that you will get the support and care you need from the maternity team. Please ask your midwife for the COVID-19 parent information for new born babies leaflet for additional guidance.

Once home your midwifery service along with Health visitor and Family Nurse will support you. We know that you will want family and friends to meet your new baby but it is

recommended you continue to follow government advice on physical distancing. It is very important for the health and wellbeing of you and your baby that you are not visited by anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolating for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or have recently returned from a country requiring quarantine.

## What if I become unwell when I get home?

If you become unwell in any way whilst at home with your baby please contact your GP, midwife or maternity unit. For non-emergency concerns please do not hesitate to call NHS 24 on 111. **If it is an emergency please call 999.**

If you are concerned about your physical or mental health or the health of your baby in any way do not wait to seek help. Call your midwife or maternity unit straight away.

## Further Information



Ready Steady Baby will support you through pregnancy until your baby is 8 weeks old. This can also be accessed online at [www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby](http://www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby)

### NHS Inform

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

### Parent Club

<https://www.parentclub.scot/>

### Royal College of Midwives

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/advice-for-pregnant-women/>

### The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG)

#### Guidance for pregnant women & their families

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

### Coronavirus vaccination helpline

For more information about who'll be offered the coronavirus vaccine and its delivery, phone 0800 030 8013 (available 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week).

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for pregnant women



*This leaflet provides you with further useful information about your maternity care. If after reading this information you still have concerns then please speak to your midwife.*



**Being pregnant is a special time in your life. The current situation may be worrying you, however we want to reassure you that maternity services are working hard to continue to provide high quality essential care and support.**

Pregnant women who develop COVID-19 do not appear to be more seriously unwell than other healthy adults and the majority will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu-like symptoms.

Symptoms to look out for include a cough, fever, shortness of breath, and loss or change of taste or smell. If you have developed these symptoms (however mild) in the last 10 days, stay at home for 10 days from the start of your symptoms and arrange to be tested online at NHS Inform, or call 0800 028 2816. Others in your household should stay home for 10 days in case they also develop symptoms. Do not go to your GP, midwife, pharmacy or hospital.

You should remain at home until you get the result of the test, and then follow the advice you will be given based on the results.

If your symptoms worsen during home isolation, especially if breathlessness develops or worsens or your symptoms haven't improved in 10 days phone 111.

If you have a medical emergency, phone 999 and tell them you have coronavirus symptoms.

You should continue to follow health advice during your pregnancy, including monitoring your baby's movements. It is important to get to know how your baby moves and Ready Steady Baby has more information. Please contact your midwife or maternity team immediately if you think your baby's movements have slowed down, stopped or changed. If in doubt, get it checked out. Be confident and report any concerns and make sure your concerns are acted upon.

## Vaccination

The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is not routinely recommended if you're pregnant, as it has not been tested on pregnant women. Vaccination in pregnancy could be considered where either:

- your risk of exposure to coronavirus is high and cannot be avoided
- you have underlying conditions that place you at very high risk of serious complications of coronavirus

In these circumstances, you should discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with your health professional. If you find out you're pregnant after you've had the first dose of the vaccine, you should wait until you are no longer pregnant before having the second dose (unless you are a high risk).

If you are considering breastfeeding your baby, you can receive the vaccine as there are no known risks with these types of vaccines. However, this does not mean there is

evidence of safety for these vaccines, at this stage, and it will be up to you to make your own decision on what is best for you and your family.

Breastfeeding has short and long term health benefits for babies and mothers including protecting the baby from infection, therefore any decision not to breastfeed should be considered carefully.

You can find further information on vaccination in pregnancy at [http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/37392-covid-19%20vaccine%20pregnancy%20leaflet-Jan2021-English\\_1.pdf](http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/37392-covid-19%20vaccine%20pregnancy%20leaflet-Jan2021-English_1.pdf).

## Should I attend my antenatal and postnatal appointments?

Yes – It is really important that you continue to **attend your scheduled routine care** when you are well. It is particularly important that you help your maternity team take care of you and your baby. While your routine schedule of care requires in person care, some aspects may be supported by Near-me video calls and remote monitoring. Your maternity team will speak to you about this.

Tested positive for COVID, are self isolating or have symptoms of coronavirus? Please contact your midwife or antenatal clinic and ask for advice on attending routine antenatal appointments. **Do not miss your appointment without agreeing with your maternity team first.**

## What about antenatal classes?

Please speak to your midwife to find out what is available in your area. You can also access an online 'virtual' class at <https://inourplace.heiapply.com/online-learning/> (using the access code TARTAN) and you can discuss the content with your midwife at your next appointment.

## What about my baby box?

You can still register for your baby box at one of your antenatal appointments and it will be delivered within 4 weeks of your due date. If you are COVID-19 positive your midwife will be able to register on your behalf.

## Can I bring someone/partner with me to my appointments?

You can have one supportive person to accompany you to the booking scan, 20 week scan and any emergency appointments. Visiting arrangements are subject to local risk assessments and physical distancing. The visitor must not be ill or showing any symptoms of coronavirus. Additional visitors may be possible dependent on local protection levels at the

time of the appointment. If you need additional support, you can be accompanied by a: carer, advocate, translator or parent (in the case of a minor). Face covering and physical distancing will be required for both yourself and your supportive person during all hospital visits. Smaller waiting areas may have further restrictions.

## What about my labour and birth?

**Birth choices:** During this pandemic, some birth choices may be unavailable in your local area due to staff and patient safety concerns. You should speak to your midwife or maternity team who will provide you with up to date information on your options in your area.

**Birth partner:** Your birth partner can be with you during your labour, the birth of your baby and after. In labour you may notice that midwives and the maternity team caring for you are wearing protective clothing such as aprons, masks or eye protection. These measures protect you and your baby, the staff caring for you and reduce the risk of spreading infection.

If you are in labour and you require additional support, for example of a carer, advocate or translator, or in the case of a minor, a parent, this person should not be counted as a visitor.

**Induced birth:** If you are being induced, your birth partner can accompany you if it is possible to maintain the recommended physical distancing from other patients.

**Operative birth:** If you are required to have an operative birth, your birth partner can be with you, except when a general anaesthetic is needed.

## Suspected or confirmed coronavirus

There is no evidence to suggest that if you have coronavirus, giving birth vaginally or by caesarean presents any difference in risks or benefits for you or your baby.

As a precautionary approach, pregnant women with suspected or confirmed coronavirus, will be advised to give birth in an obstetric unit. This is so the maternity team looking after you have access to additional support from the wider team if required. You will be cared for in a dedicated area to keep you, your baby and staff as safe as possible.

## Taking care of your Mental Health and Wellbeing

With all the changes happening it is normal to feel stressed and anxious. Parent Club has some helpful tips for managing anxiety during pregnancy at <https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/mental-health-support-for-expectant-parents>.

If you are worried about your mental health and wellbeing or have existing mental health difficulties, support is still available, and it is important to let your midwife know as they will be able to help you put the right support in place.