

The information on COVID-19 is changing fast. We'll do our best to inform you of what you need to know.

There's currently very limited information on risks during pregnancy to both mom and baby. Thus far:

- We're not sure whether pregnant women are more likely to catch COVID-19 or get very sick from it compared to others. It's always a good idea for pregnant women to try to avoid getting an infection since many viruses like influenza (the flu) can be worse in pregnancy. Pregnant women should follow the same rules to avoid infection as others (see below).
- So far, it doesn't seem the baby will catch COVID-19 in the womb if the mom catches it.
- There are no known birth defects related to COVID-19 infection during pregnancy. High fever itself during the first trimester may increase the risk of birth defects.
- An increase in problems, such as miscarriage, early labor or distress in the baby, is probably only a concern if a mom is severely ill. Most pregnant women won't require delivery just because they become infected.
- **Mother and baby may need to be separated after birth to prevent infection of the infant if the woman is infected at the time of birth.**
- A woman can breastfeed even if infected. This may actually help the baby fight infection if the mom follows certain instructions (see resources at the bottom).

The best way to avoid getting sick:

- **Wash your hands** (for at least 20 seconds) or use hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day.
- Avoid interacting with people who are sick with a flu-like illness (fever >100.4°F, cough, shortness of breath). Staying **at least 6 feet away from them** should minimize the risk.
- Limit the time you spend in crowds and gatherings of groups of people (social distancing).

If you or someone living with you develops symptoms of COVID-19 or is exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, call the office (day or night) for advice about further evaluation and management:

- Symptoms include fever >100.4°F, **new** cough, **new/worsening** shortness of breath.
- **Whether for pregnancy-related issues or concern for COVID symptoms, please call your doctor's office prior to coming to the hospital or doctor's office** so we can prepare for your arrival. To avoid others becoming ill, we'll need to safely bring you to a private area for testing. Remember: It's still flu season, so we can discuss if you need treatment based on your symptoms.

Please be aware that UMass Memorial has revised its visitation policy in response to this outbreak. Until further notice, you'll be allowed to bring only one healthy visitor/support person, who is at least 18 years old, with you when you come to your office/ultrasound appointments and to the hospital, including during labor and delivery. This is to keep all patients and staff safe. We'll change the rules back as soon as it's clear that the danger has passed. We appreciate your understanding.

Each birth is special. We want every mother, baby and family to be safe and healthy. Please be aware that all providers will be working together to care for you. If your own doctor/midwife or their partner can't be there, another doctor/midwife may manage your pregnancy, including delivering your baby and caring for you after birth.

For more information, **please** visit the following **reliable** websites:

- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnant-women-and-children.html>
- BabyCenter, partnered with Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
https://www.babycenter.com/0_coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-faq-medical-experts-answer-ya_40007006.bc
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- Worcester Division of Public Health
<http://www.worcesterma.gov/coronavirus>
- UMass Memorial Health Care
<https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/umass-memorial-health-care/patients-visitors/coronavirus-covid-19-news-and-information>