

Information for COVID-19 positive mothers

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What do we know about COVID-19 and pregnancy?

There is no evidence that COVID-19 causes birth defects.

Healthy pregnant women are not more likely to get infected with COVID-19 than healthy non-pregnant women, and are not at higher risk of a severe infection requiring ventilation compared to non-pregnant women.

Smoking or vaping appears to be associated with worse outcomes if you're infected with COVID-19. Everyone, pregnant women included, need to stop smoking or vaping. Consult your health care provider for smoking cessation options available to you.

There is only limited data on pregnancy outcome when the infection is in the first and early second trimester, but these reports don't identify a higher risk of miscarriage or spontaneous preterm labour. Regardless, if you get sick you and your baby will be monitored closely during and after your illness.

The evidence suggests that the chance of baby being exposed to the virus during pregnancy is very small, if at all. Therefore, if you are COVID-19 positive at the time of delivery, your baby is not likely to be born sick. However, the health care providers looking after your baby may decide to test the baby sometime after birth.

I have tested positive for COVID-19. What will my prenatal care be like?

If you are COVID-19 positive you should discuss with your care provider when you should go to Labour & Delivery at the hospital. This should occur if you were to progressively get sicker because of shortness of breath or if you were unable to stay hydrated. Please enter through the Emergency room of your local hospital.

If you develop a fever you should be using acetaminophen (ie. Tylenol) to help control it; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (ie. Advil) should be avoided in pregnancy and should probably be avoided in COVID-19 positive patients.

You should be practicing self-isolation and social distancing to minimize community spread to your family and others.

For any clinic or ultrasound appointments, contact your maternity care provider – we will instruct you on how to safely come to your appointments or schedule them virtually if possible.

I have tested positive for COVID-19 and I am going to be delivering soon, what can I expect?

If you are COVID-19 positive your care will be different in order to protect you, your baby and the staff caring for you.

If you normally would have your care by a midwife or your family doctor, you will be transferred to an obstetrician for care during labour and delivery. Your midwife or family doctor may still provide postpartum care for you and/or your baby while in the hospital and after discharge home.

COVID-19 positive women will be required to wear a mask during their entire labour and delivery (including pushing) and to use hand sanitizer frequently in order to protect their baby, their partner and the health care staff. Asymptomatic partners must also wear masks all the time and use hand sanitizer frequently. We recognize that this adds extra stress to your delivery and postpartum course; we will all be there to help you.

Delayed cord clamping and skin-to-skin contact is still practiced with COVID-19 positive mothers who are wearing a face mask and have washed their hands.

I have tested positive for COVID-19 – what will my care after delivery be like?

Mothers will need to continue wearing a mask after delivery, during their stay in the hospital and at home in order to protect the baby. You can continue to use the same mask that was used in hospital as long as it is not wet or visibly soiled.

The baby's bassinette should be kept at least 2 meters from the mother's bed; ideally a physical barrier such as a curtain should be used. This should also be the case at home, not just at the hospital.

COVID-19 positive mothers or partners should always wear a mask and wash their hands before touching the baby; regardless of whether it's to feed, change a diaper or just interact.

Before anyone touches the baby, they must wash their hands. Nobody should be kissing the baby. Even though it is a very exciting time, families should still practice social distancing and not have friends or family over to see the baby and celebrate.

There are some reports that even after a period of improvement, COVID-19 positive patients can have a rapid deterioration. As such, we would plan a further 24-48 hours of observation in hospital for mothers who are COVID-19 positive before discharge home after delivery. Even then there may be frequent phone follow-ups to check in.

What other resources are available to me?

KFL&A has a public health phone line (613-549-1154) and Facebook page (Child & Babytalk in KFL&A) which is operating Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. These are serviced by a public health Registered Nurse, who can answer questions regarding infant nutrition, breastfeeding, pregnancy, newborn care and mental health including screening. This line can also connect families to services which are still operating during the pandemic such as *Health Babies*, *Health Children*

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(HBHC). More information can be found at <https://www.kflaph.ca/en/clinics-and-classes/Child-and-Babytalk-Drop-Ins.aspx>

The Breastfeeding Clinics are operating Monday to Friday, in the afternoons, in Kingston only. Breastfeeding mothers can speak with a Lactation Consultant on the phone (613-549-1154) and can still be seen face to face after proper screening for COVID-19.

You can also sign up for a new email program that provides timely emails for families corresponding to their baby's age (up to 18 months). The HBHC screener and the nurses on the post-partum floor will facilitate this for you.