CORONAVIRUS-19 (COVID-19): PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) have issued guidance and recommendations specific to Pregnancy and COVID-19. This document will aid in answering commonly asked questions specific to Pregnancy and COVID-19. It is important to remember that information will change as we continue to learn more about this new virus.

Always consult with your OB/GYN Provider directly for any questions or concerns regarding your pregnancy.

REFERENCES:

1. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: https://www.acog.org/patient-resources/faqs/pregnancy/coronavirus-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/
3. National Association of County and City Health Officials: https://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory
4. Postpartum Support International Helpline: https://www.postpartum.net/ 1-800-944-4773

HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT PREGNANT WOMEN?

- Current reports show that pregnant women do not have more severe symptoms than the general public. But researchers are still learning how the illness affects pregnant women. Doctors urge pregnant women to take the same steps as the general public to avoid coronavirus.

HOW CAN COVID-19 AFECT A FETUS?

- It's too early for researchers to know how COVID-19 might affect a *fetus*. Some pregnant women with COVID-19 have had *preterm* births, but it is not clear whether the preterm births were because of COVID-19. It's also not clear if COVID-19 can pass to a fetus during labor and delivery.

WHAT SHOULD PREGNANT WOMAN DO TO AVOID THE CORONAVIRUS?

- The virus spreads mainly from person-to-person contact. Pregnant women can take the same steps as other people to protect themselves, include:
  - washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - cleaning hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if you can't wash them (rub until your hands feel dry)
  - avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
  - staying home as much as possible
  - staying at least 6 feet away from other people if you need to go out
  - avoiding people who are sick

SHOULD PREGNANT WOMEN WEAR A MASK OR FACE COVERING?

- As of April 3, the CDC says all people, including pregnant women, can wear a cloth face covering when they are in public to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Face coverings are recommended because studies have shown that people can spread the virus before showing any symptoms.
- Wearing a cloth face covering is most important in places where you may not be able to stay 6 feet away from other people, like a grocery store or pharmacy. It also is important in parts of the country where COVID-19 is spreading quickly. But you should still try to stay at least 6 feet away from others whenever you leave your home.
- If you have COVID-19 or think you may have it, you should wear a mask while you are around other people. You also should wear a mask if you are taking care of someone who has COVID-19 or has symptoms. You do not need to wear a surgical mask or medical-grade mask (N95 mask).

HOW WILL COVID-19 AFFECT PRENATAL AND POSTPARTUM CARE VISITS?

- As the virus spreads, it is a good idea to call your *obstetrician–gynecologist (OB-GYN)* or other health care professional to ask how your visits may be changed. Some women may have fewer or more spaced out in-person visits. You also may talk more with your health care team over the phone or through an online video call. This is called telemedicine. It is a good way for you to get the care you need while preventing the spread of disease.
- If you have a visit scheduled, your care team's office may call you ahead of time. They may tell you about telemedicine or make sure you do not have symptoms of COVID-19 if you are going in to the office. You also can call them before your visits if you do not hear from them.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM PREGNANT AND THINK I HAVE COVID-19?

- If you think you may have been exposed to the coronavirus and have a fever or cough, call your OB-GYN or other health care professional for advice.
- If you have emergency warning signs, call 911, 678-1234 (on WSMR) or go to the hospital right away. Emergency warning signs include the following:
    - Having a hard time breathing or shortness of breath (more than what has been normal for you during pregnancy)
    - Ongoing pain or pressure in the chest
    - Sudden confusion
    - Being unable to respond to others
    - Blue lips or face
- If you go to the hospital, try to call ahead to let them know you are coming so they can prepare. If you have other symptoms that worry you, call your OB-GYN or 911 or 678-1234 (on WSMR).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM PREGNANT AND DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19?

- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, follow the advice from the CDC and your OB-GYN or other health care professional. The current CDC advice for all people with COVID-19 includes the following:
    - Stay home except to get medical care. Avoid public transportation.
    - Speak with your health care team over the phone before going to their office. Get medical care right away if you feel worse or think it's an emergency.
    - Separate yourself from other people in your home.
    - Wear a face mask when you are around other people and when you go to get medical care.

CAN COVID-19 PASS TO A BABY THROUGH BREAST MILK?

- So far, the virus has not been found in breast milk. But there is not enough information yet on whether women who are sick can pass the virus through breast milk. Breast milk gives babies protection against many illnesses. It also is the best source of nutrition for most babies. Talk with your ob-gyn or other health care professional about whether to start or continue breastfeeding. You can make this decision together with your family and health care team.

HOW CAN I AVOID PASSING COVID-19 TO MY BABY?

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or if you have been diagnosed, you can take the following steps to avoid passing the infection to your baby:
    - Wash your hands before touching your baby. See the CDC's handwashing tips.
    - Wear a face mask while breastfeeding if possible.
    - Wash your hands before touching any breast pump or bottle parts and clean all pump and bottle parts after use. See the CDC's advice for cleaning a breast pump.
    - You also can have someone who is not sick feed your breast milk to your baby after you pump.