

COVID-19 & PREGNANCY

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new illness that affects the lungs and breathing. It is caused by a new coronavirus. Symptoms include fever, cough, and trouble breathing. It also may cause stomach problems, such as nausea and diarrhea, and a loss of your sense of smell or taste. Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after you are exposed to the virus. Many people who have the virus do not have any symptoms at all but could still spread it to others.

How may COVID-19 affect Pregnancy?

We have limited information at this time about how COVID-19 affects pregnant women. However, we know that other respiratory illnesses can be more severe in pregnancy. For this reason, it is especially important to follow social distancing recommendations and report any symptoms or possible exposure to your physician. We are learning more about COVID-19 every day. Please see the **"Frequently Asked Questions"** on page two for more information.

How Kaiser Permanente is ensuring your safety

We've made changes to ensure that you get the care you need in the safest way possible. If you are concerned that you or a family member are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, please contact us first before coming in so we can be sure to plan the right care for you.

- You can get care from the comfort of your home with video or telephone appointments.
- You can refill your prescriptions online and have them delivered by mail.
- We have adjusted prenatal care schedules so that you come into the centers less often. Many appointments will be completed by telephone or video.
- Virtual prenatal classes (in both English and Spanish) will be regularly held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday and Thursday evenings (6 – 8 p.m.) of each month.
- Health and wellness resources are available online by visiting www.kp.org/maternity.

For more information, Call Kaiser Permanente Medical Advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 703) 359-7878 or (800) 777-7904. TTY: (885) 632-8278

How to protect yourself

Pregnant women should do the same things as the general public to avoid infection. You can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by taking these actions:

- Cover your cough (using your elbow is a good technique).
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Social Distancing. This means staying home as much as possible and avoiding crowded, public places where close contact with others is likely.
- For essential trips like grocery shopping, the CDC recommends staying 6-feet away from others.
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60% or higher).
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect your home as usual using regular household disinfectant sprays or wipes.

Frequently Asked Questions

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What we know (and don't know) regarding COVID-19 and pregnancy

HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT PREGNANT WOMEN AND BABIES?

We do not know at this time if COVID-19 would cause problems during pregnancy or affect the health of the baby after birth. It's also not clear if COVID-19 can pass to a fetus during labor and delivery. Doctors urge pregnant women to take the same steps as the general public to avoid coronavirus.

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

- 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.

HOW CAN I MANAGE STRESS AND ANXIETY?

Being home a lot and avoiding other people can be hard. The tips below may help.

- Eat healthy meals and exercise regularly. Talk to your ob-gyn about which activities are best for you.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Stay connected with your friends and family, over the phone or online.
- Ask for help from friends and loved ones.
- Take breaks from news and social media.
- Try relaxation activities, like prenatal yoga or meditation.
- Tell your ob-gyn or other health care professional if you are feeling sad or anxious during pregnancy or after delivery.

Helpful Resources:

[Digital tools for emotional wellness \(myStrength Program\)](#)
Kp.org/selfcare

Kaiser Permanente Behavioral Health Advice Line
1.866.530.8778 or 1.800.777.7904

[Postpartum Support International](#)
Postpartum.net
1.800.944.4PPD

SHOULD I MAKE ANY CHANGES TO MY LABOR AND DELIVERY PLANS?

Talk with your ob-gyn or other health care professional about your labor and delivery plans. In most cases, the timing and method of delivery (vaginal birth or cesarean birth) do not need to be changed.

Keep in mind:

- If you are sick, your health care team may wear masks or take other steps to prevent spreading the infection.
- Your baby may need to be separated from you after birth if you are sick to prevent infection.
- Your hospital or birth center may be adjusting their policies. There may be changes to the number of visitors allowed and how long you will stay in the hospital. Visitors who have recently traveled from certain regions may not be allowed to visit you. Be sure to check with your hospital and ob-gyn or other health care professional about your birth plan.

Kaiser Permanente Premier Hospitals-- Contact Information:

Baltimore Washington Medical Center (410.787.4600)

umms.org/bwmc/health-services/womens/maternity

Greater Baltimore Medical Center (443.849.2597)

gbmc.org/labor-and-delivery

Holy Cross Hospitals- Silver Spring & Germantown (301.557.6041)

holycrosshealth.org/find-a-service-or-specialty/maternity-services

Washington Hospital Center (202.877.7000)

medstarwashington.org/our-services/womens-health/treatments/maternity-services

Reston Hospital Center (703.639.9538)

restonhospital.com/specialties/labor-and-delivery

Stafford Hospital (540.741.9000)

marywashingtonhealthcare.com/Our-Services/Women-Children/Pregnancy-Motherhood

Virginia Hospital Center (703.558.5000)

virginiahospitalcenter.com/medical/women/default.aspx

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

So far, the virus has not been found in breast milk and breastfeeding is considered safe for mothers who have tested positive for COVID-19. In some circumstances you may need to be temporarily separated from your baby and use a breast pump. You will be given detailed instructions prior to leaving the hospital on what to do to protect your baby.

CAN I TRAVEL?

The CDC is updating travel recommendations often. Visit the [CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel](#) page for the latest updates.