

# COVID-19 (Coronavirus) What pregnant and new moms should know

**Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person.**

## What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Mild to severe respiratory illness (cough, congestion, runny nose)
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing

Severe complications have included pneumonia (infection of the lungs) that may require extra support, like oxygen. Symptoms usually appear 2-14 days after a person is exposed to the virus.

## Are pregnant women with COVID-19 at increased risk for complications?

To date, we have not seen that COVID-19 leads to adverse outcomes for pregnant women and their growing babies. Pregnant women may be more prone to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19, and the complications from these illnesses. It is important to take precautions like washing your hands and avoiding contact with people who are sick. Additionally, in an abundance of caution, pregnant or lactating VCU Health team members will not care for patients with COVID-19.

## I am healthy. Should I be concerned about coming to my appointment?

At this time, we are postponing annual appointments, and expanding virtual visit options – i.e. visits by phone, computer or tablet – for certain prenatal and well-baby appointments. You are encouraged to speak with your provider regarding your personal care.

Your health is important to us. We are screening all patients for illness symptoms. Even with this screening process, it's important to follow the following tips:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with others
- Sit 3-6 feet from others in the waiting room
- Wash hands frequently throughout your visit
- Cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze

## I'm close to my delivery date. Will there be visitor restrictions during or after my delivery?

In order to protect you, your baby, other patients and our team, visitors will be limited. Please refer to [vcuhealth.org/covid-19](#) for updated visitor policies. Additionally, we recognize the impact that doulas make on healthy birth outcomes. Healthy, certified doulas are welcome and not included a patient's visitor count.

## I'm sick, or my baby is sick. How do I know if it is COVID-19?

COVID-19 symptoms can be similar to other respiratory illnesses like the flu. If you have concerns, contact your health care provider or your child's pediatrician before heading to the doctor's office or emergency room. They may ask you to take precautions to avoid exposing others. If you are having trouble breathing, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room (call ahead if you are able).

## I feel sick and have an upcoming appointment. What should I do?

The first step is to call your OB/GYN or midwife (currently pregnant) or your pediatrician/ family medicine doctor (for newborns). We need to know your symptoms before your visit so we can offer the necessary precautions and care, especially if you have a fever, cough or runny nose.

- Nelson Clinic Women's Health: (804) 828-4409
- Stony Point Women's Health: (804) 560-8950
- Children's Pavilion: (804) 828-CHOR (2467)
- Nelson Clinic Family Medicine: (804) 828-5883
- Hayes E. Willis Health Center: (804) 230-7777

- Community Memorial Hospital (CMH) Women's Health Services: (434) 584-2273 (option 1, then option 3)
- CMH Labor and Delivery: (434) 584-5052
- CMH Family Care Center: (434) 584-2273 (option 1, then option 1)

## Can pregnant women with COVID-19 pass the virus to their fetus or newborn?

Due to limited data, we don't know if a pregnant woman can pass COVID-19 to their fetus. Getting other respiratory illnesses (like the flu) during pregnancy can cause complications like low birth weight and preterm (early) labor.

## What's considered a fever in a newborn? When should I be concerned?

- A rectal temperature is the most accurate reading for children under 3 years of age.
- Call the doctor right away if your child is younger than 3 months and has a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- Let your child's health care provider know how you took your child's temperature (mouth, armpit or rectal).

## Can you transmit the COVID-19 virus through breast milk? Should I continue breastfeeding?

We are still learning about how COVID-19 is spread. Person-to-person spread is thought to happen mainly via respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus has not been found in the breast milk of women with COVID-19, in the limited cases reported to date. A mother with confirmed COVID-19 should take precautions like washing her hands before touching her baby and wearing a face mask while feeding. You should continue to breastfeed your baby as your baby will gain antibodies and key nutrients from breast milk.

## Is it OK to use donor milk during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Donor milk provided by our hospital comes from a milk bank that follows thorough screening and sterilization processes. We do not recommend using donor milk from unknown or private sources.

## I was signed up for a tour of the Labor and Delivery unit and some Parenting Classes. Should I still go?

As our first priority is your safety and well-being, all tours and Family Life education classes will be canceled until further notice. View our virtual tour on the [vcumom.com](http://vcumom.com) website: [vcuhealth.org/our-services/pregnancy-and-birth/facilities/labor-delivery-unit](http://vcuhealth.org/our-services/pregnancy-and-birth/facilities/labor-delivery-unit).

For Family Life education, online classes are available with YoMingo at no extra cost through May 31, 2020. To take advantage of this resource, visit [www2.customizedinc.com/childbirtheeducation](http://www2.customizedinc.com/childbirtheeducation)

For Getting Better Together support group, please go to our website for additional options: <https://www.vcuhealth.org/our-services/pregnancy-and-birth/resources/postpartum-support-group>

## How can I protect myself and my baby?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The CDC recommends the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Stay home when you are sick
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Only wear a facemask if a health care professional recommends it
- People who have COVID-19 should use a facemask to protect others from risk of infection

For the latest updates, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html).

For ongoing updates from CHoR, visit [chrichmond.org/COVID19](http://chrichmond.org/COVID19)