

## COVID-19 and Pregnancy

The current COVID-19 pandemic is a serious issue and cause for concern on many levels. Pregnancy is always a unique moment in time for women. You may have some additional questions about how to best protect your health and the health of your baby during the pandemic.

At Beverly Hospital, the Department of Maternal and Child Health is committed to providing top-notch, high-quality care. Protocols for care are actively developed and updated as more information is learned about this viral infection and how best to care for our patients and their new babies. Here are some FAQs that provide information and advice for expecting parents. If you have specific health concerns, please reach out to your obstetric provider.

### **Am I more likely to get COVID-19 during pregnancy?**

Information about COVID-19 in pregnancy at this time is limited, and we do not know yet whether pregnancy increases the risk for or severity of an infection. Most people who are otherwise healthy do not require hospitalization for COVID-19 illness. Due to normal changes in pregnancy, pregnant patients may be more likely to become sicker from viral infections. Experts around the country and world are evaluating the impact of the infection on pregnant women.

### **Does COVID-19 cause pregnancy complications?**

We do not yet know whether COVID-19 increases the risk for complications during pregnancy. There are reports from other areas of the world that the risk for preterm delivery may be higher among pregnant patients with COVID-19. It remains unclear whether this reflects spontaneous preterm labor or whether obstetricians induced labor in patients with COVID-19 earlier than their due date to directly benefit the patient and baby.

### **Is it safe for me to come to the hospital? I'm worried that I might get infected by being there.**

Hospitals, including labor and delivery units, are taking extraordinary precautions to keep our patients and staff healthy. At Beverly Hospital, this includes a limit on visitors to one healthy support person during childbirth. We ask that this support person remain with you the entire hospital stay. With these measures, we feel confident that the facilities at Beverly Hospital are safe for expectant mothers and newborn babies.

Obstetric providers are always available to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If you have any issues, please contact your provider.

### **Can my baby get COVID-19 if I have COVID-19 during pregnancy?**

We do not yet know if the virus can be transmitted across the placenta. To date, most babies born to mothers with COVID-19 have not been infected.

### **If I have COVID-19, will I need a c-section?**

Typically, no. For women who are only mildly symptomatic, there is no evidence that this would help you or your baby. Your doctor may recommend a c-section for another reason not related to COVID-19. It is possible that patients who become very sick with COVID-19 may not be able to tolerate a long labor and thus require a c-section.

### **What will happen if I have COVID-19 at the time of my delivery?**

Your team will wear special equipment (masks, gowns and gloves) to help protect against infection. After birth, your baby may be at increased risk of infection. There are precautions that can reduce the chance of your baby being exposed and infected, which will be discussed with you. Talk to your doctor and pediatrician about the best recommendations for you and caring for your baby.

### **Can I breastfeed if I have COVID-19?**

Yes. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. Limited studies have not found the virus in breast milk and your breast milk may provide antibodies to help protect your newborn. If you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, precautions to avoid spreading the virus include washing hands before touching your baby and wearing a mask. If you choose to express breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, wash your hands before touching

any pump or bottle parts and clean the pump and parts after each use. Consider having someone who is not sick feed your baby the pumped milk.

Visit the [CDC's website](#) for the most up-to-date information about breastfeeding precautions for COVID-19.

**What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?**

If you have fever, cough, difficulty breathing, loss of your sense of smell, or exposure to someone with known COVID-19, you should call your obstetric provider's office. Your provider will tell you if you need to come to the hospital, have testing or stay at home. Most people will be able to stay at home and monitor their symptoms.

**How can I stay healthy during pregnancy?**

Pregnant patients can maintain their health in the same ways that people who are not pregnant do: by washing hands frequently, covering their mouth and nose with a mask in public places and staying at home as much as possible. Hydration and adequate rest also are important in maintaining the health of your immune system.

**Is there anything else I should be asking?**

We recognize that delivering a baby right now may cause anxiety. This is a natural reflection of love for your growing family. We remain committed to keeping you and your family safe and to preserving the joy of childbirth.

**What resources are available to me?**

Beverly Hospital offers a free online educational platform, YoMingo, that you can access anytime, anywhere. Here you can view information about pregnancy, labor and birth, your hospital stay, breastfeeding and more.

To register, visit [bit.ly/beverlyyomingo](https://bit.ly/beverlyyomingo) and follow the instructions. Once registered, you will be sent a link to gain access. The platform may be accessed on any browser at [myYoMingo.com](https://myYoMingo.com) or you may download the free app, myYomingo. The user name and password received from the registration link is required.