Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If You Are Pregnant, Breastfeeding, or Caring for Young Children
Protect yourself and your family from COVID-19

Based on what we know at this time, **pregnant people might be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19** compared to non-pregnant people. Additionally, there may be an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm birth, among pregnant people with COVID-19. Therefore, if you are pregnant, be mindful about reducing your risk of getting sick. If you are caring for children, you can teach them everyday steps (such as proper handwashing) to help them stay healthy and, in turn, help protect yourself and your family.

Reduce your risk of getting COVID-19.

It is especially important for people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and those who live with them, to protect themselves from getting COVID-19.

The best ways to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 are to:

- Limit your interactions with other people as much as possible.
- Take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others.

If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, call your healthcare provider within 24 hours.

Venturing out into a public setting? What to consider before you go.

As communities and businesses across the United States are opening, you may be thinking about resuming some activities, running errands, and attending events and gatherings. **There is no way to ensure you have zero risk of infection,** so it is important to understand the risks and know how to be as safe as possible.

People who are pregnant, and those who live with them, should consider their level of risk before deciding to go out and ensure they are taking steps to protect themselves and others. Consider avoiding activities where taking protective measures may be difficult, such as activities where social distancing can't be maintained. **Everyone should take steps**

to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19 to protect themselves, their communities, and people who are at increased risk of severe illness.

In general, **the more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them, and the longer that interaction, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19.**

- If you decide to engage in public activities, continue to protect yourself by practicing everyday preventive actions.
- Keep these items on hand and use them when venturing out: a cloth face covering, tissues, and a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, if possible.
- If possible, avoid others who are not wearing cloth face coverings or ask others around you to wear cloth face coverings.

> **Related:** How to Protect Yourself & Others

COVID-19 and pregnancy considerations

Based on what we know at this time, **pregnant people might be at increased risk** for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people. Additionally, there may be an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm birth, among pregnant people with COVID-19.

Actions to take if you are pregnant

- Do not skip your prenatal care appointments.
- Limit your interactions with other people as much as possible.
- Take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others.
- Make sure that you have at least a 30-day supply of your medicines.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about how to stay healthy and take care of yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest community health center ↗ or health department.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have any questions related to your health.
- Seek care immediately if you have a medical emergency.
- You may feel increased stress during this pandemic. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Learn about stress and coping.
- Learn more about how to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19.

Vaccines during pregnancy

Although there is no vaccine available to protect against the virus that causes COVID-19, routine vaccines are an important part of protecting your health. Receiving some vaccines during pregnancy, such as the influenza (flu) and Tdap vaccines, can help protect you and your baby. If you are pregnant, you should continue to receive your recommended vaccines. Talk with your healthcare provider about visits for vaccines during pregnancy.

Prenatal and postpartum care

It is important to take care of yourself and your baby during pregnancy and after delivery.

Do not skip your prenatal care appointments or postpartum appointments. If you are concerned about attending your appointment due to COVID-19, talk to your healthcare provider.

- Ask your healthcare provider how they are taking steps to separate healthy patients from those who may be sick.
- Some healthcare providers might choose to cancel or postpone some visits. Others may switch certain appointments to telemedicine visits, which are appointments over the phone or video. These decisions will be based on the circumstances in your community as well as your individual care plan.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have an urgent medical question.
- In case of emergency, call 911 or go to your local emergency department. If you are not driving, call the emergency department on the way to explain that you are pregnant and have an emergency. They should have an infection prevention plan to protect you from getting COVID-19 if you need emergency care. **Do not delay getting emergency care because of COVID-19.**

Delivery locations during the COVID-19 pandemic

Delivering your baby is always safest under the supervision of trained healthcare professionals. If you have questions about the best place to deliver your baby, discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Newborns born to mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Much is still unknown about the risks of COVID-19 to newborns.

- Newborns can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 after being in close contact with an infected person.
- Some babies have tested positive for the virus shortly after birth. It is unknown if these babies got the virus before, during, or after birth.
- Most newborns who have tested positive for COVID-19 had mild or no symptoms and have recovered fully. However, there are a few reports of newborns with severe illness.
- A small number of other problems, such as preterm (early) birth and other problems with pregnancy and birth, have been reported in babies born to mothers who tested positive for COVID-19. We do not know if these problems were related to the virus.

CDC recognizes that the ideal setting for the care of a healthy, full-term newborn during the birth hospitalization is within the mother's room. Temporary separation of the newborn from a mother with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be considered to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to the newborn. The risks and benefits of temporary separation of the mother from her newborn should be discussed with the mother by her healthcare team. Decisions about temporary separation should be made with respect to the mother's wishes. If the mother chooses a temporary separation to reduce risk of spreading the virus and would like to breastfeed, she should express breast milk and have a healthy caregiver who is not at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 bottle feed the newborn the expressed breast milk if possible.

If the mother with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 does not choose temporary separation in the hospital, she should take precautions to avoid spreading the virus to the newborn, including washing her hands and wearing a cloth face covering when within 6 feet of her newborn. The newborn should be kept ≥6 feet away from the mother, as much as possible, including the use of physical barriers (e.g., placing the newborn in an incubator).

Mothers who are discharged from the hospital but have not met criteria to discontinue isolation may choose to continue to separate from the newborn at home to reduce the risk of spreading the virus, if a healthy caregiver is available. If a healthy caregiver is not available, a mother with COVID-19 can still care for her infant if she is well enough while using precautions (for example, hand washing, wearing a cloth face covering).

Separation from the newborn may make it harder for some new mothers to start or continue breastfeeding. Frequent hand expression or pumping, ideally with a hospital-grade pump, is necessary to establish and build milk supply during temporary separation. Pumping every 2-3 hours (at least 8-10 times in 24 hours, including at night), especially in the first few days, signals the breasts to produce milk and prevents blocked milk ducts and breast infections. Mothers who are unable to establish milk production in the hospital after birth, or who have to temporarily stop breastfeeding, can relactate with skilled assistance from a lactation support provider. Additional information on relactation is available.

COVID-19 and breastfeeding

Mothers who choose to breastfeed:

- Breast milk provides protection against many illnesses and is the best source of nutrition for most infants. Learn more about breastfeeding.
- You, along with your family and healthcare providers, should decide whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding.
- We do not know for sure if mothers with COVID-19 can spread the virus to babies in their breast milk, but the limited data available suggest this is not likely.
- If you have COVID-19 and choose to breastfeed:
  - Wear a cloth face covering while breastfeeding and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before each feeding.
- If you have COVID-19 and choose to express breast milk:
  - Use a dedicated breast pump (not shared).
  - Wear a cloth face covering during expression and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching any pump or bottle parts and before expressing breast milk.
  - Follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning [Español] after each use, cleaning all parts that come into contact with breast milk.
  - If possible, expressed breast milk should be fed to the infant by a healthy caregiver who does not have COVID-19, is not at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and is living in the same home.
- Parents and other caregivers should follow recommendations described in the Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings.

Additional CDC resources to support infant nutrition include:

- Breastfeeding
- Formula Feeding
- Feeding from a Bottle
- Vitamins & Minerals
- Additional Helpful Resources
- FAQs

Other Important Information for New Parents:

- Jaundice and Kernicterus

COVID-19 and children

There is much more to be learned about how this disease affects children. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, most illnesses have been among adults. Some reports suggest that infants under 1 year old and those with underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 than other children.

- Children with COVID-19 generally have mild, cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported in some children.
- Children with certain underlying medical conditions, such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, or weak immune systems, might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Call your child's healthcare provider if you are worried about your child's health or if your child has symptoms of COVID-19.
- In case of emergency, call 911 or go to your local emergency department. Emergency departments have infection prevention plans to protect you and your child from getting COVID-19 if your child needs emergency care. **Do not delay getting emergency care for your child because of COVID-19.**

Related: Children and youth with special healthcare needs.

Face shields for newborns and infants

Plastic face shields for newborns and infants are NOT recommended. There are no data supporting the use of infant face shields for protection against COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses. An infant face shield could increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or accidental suffocation and strangulation. Infants, including newborns, move frequently, which could increase the possibility of their nose and mouth becoming blocked by the plastic face shield or foam components. The baby's movement could also cause the face shield to become displaced, resulting in strangulation from the strap.

Information for how to protect newborns from becoming sick with COVID-19 while in the hospital can be found in CDC's Considerations for Inpatient Obstetrics Healthcare Settings. Additional information on how to protect yourself and others, including newborns and infants, from COVID-19 illness is also available.

Cloth face coverings for children, parents, and other caregivers

CDC recommends that everyone 2 years and older wear a cloth face covering that covers their nose and mouth when they are out in the community. **Because of the danger of suffocation, do NOT put cloth face coverings on babies or children younger than 2 years**. Cloth face coverings should also not be worn by anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, can't move, or is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

Parents and other caregivers should keep in mind that wearing a cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing, frequent hand washing, or other everyday preventive actions – please wear your cloth face covering in addition to practicing other prevention steps. A cloth face covering is not intended to protect you, the wearer, but it may

prevent you from spreading the virus to others. This would be especially important if you are infected but do not have symptoms of COVID-19. Please remember that medical face masks and N95 respirators are reserved for healthcare personnel and other first responders.

> Learn more about cloth face coverings.

Safe sleep for infants during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents of infants may experience increased stress and fatigue that could affect their infants' sleep practices. Safe sleep is an important part of keeping infants healthy, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have an infant, you can help reduce your baby's risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related deaths by doing the following:

- Place your baby on his or her back for all sleep times – naps and at night.
- Use a firm, flat sleep surface, such as a mattress in a crib, covered by a fitted sheet.
- Have the baby share your room but not your bed. Your baby should not sleep on an adult bed, cot, air mattress, or couch, or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else.
- Keep soft bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and soft toys out of your baby's sleep area.
- Do not cover your baby's head or allow your baby to get too hot. Signs your baby may be getting too hot include if he or she is sweating or if his or her chest feels hot.
- Do not smoke or allow anyone to smoke around your baby.

> Learn more about how to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Well visits and routine vaccine visits for children during the COVID-19 pandemic

Routine well child visits and vaccine visits are still important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Newborn visits. Ideally, newborn visits should be done in person so that your pediatric healthcare provider can check your baby's growth and feeding, check your baby for jaundice, make sure your baby's newborn screening tests were done, and get any repeat or follow-up testing, if necessary. At the newborn visit, your pediatric healthcare provider will also check how you and your baby are doing overall. Newborn screening tests include a bloodspot, hearing test, and test for critical congenital heart defects. Learn more about newborn screening tests.

Well child visits. Your pediatric healthcare provider will check your child's development at well child visits. You can track your child's developmental milestones with CDC's free Milestone Tracker app.

Vaccine visits. Vaccines are an important part of keeping your child healthy, especially if your child is under 2 years old. Vaccines help provide immunity before being exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. Although there is not yet a vaccine to help protect against COVID-19, vaccines for illnesses such as measles, influenza (flu), whooping cough (pertussis), and other infectious diseases are important for your child's health. This will help to prevent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases among young children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ask your healthcare provider how they are taking steps to separate healthy patients from those who may be sick. Some health care providers may choose to delay visits like well child checks and routine vaccine visits. These decisions will be based on circumstances in your community and your child's individual care plan. Call your provider's office to ask about any upcoming appointments or about when your child's vaccinations are due.

Coping with stress

Pandemics can be stressful for everyone. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in both adults and children. **Coping successfully with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.**

Talk with your children about the pandemic. It is important to try to stay calm and to give children information that is truthful and appropriate for their ages and developmental levels. Children respond differently to stressful situations than adults. CDC offers resources to help you talk with your children about COVID-19.

Depression during and after pregnancy is common and can be treated. Postpartum depression is depression that can happen after having a baby. If you think you may be experiencing depression, seek treatment from your health care provider as soon as possible. Find more information on depression during and after pregnancy.

Pregnant people and parents caring for young children may be experiencing increased stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CDC offers resources to help with Stress and Coping.

More information

How to Protect Yourself

ASL Video Series: What is the Risk to Pregnant Women of Getting COVID-19?

ASL Video Series: Can COVID-19 be Passed from a Pregnant Woman to the Fetus or Newborn?