

Guidance for Pregnant or Lactating Healthcare Personnel and COVID-19

As women's healthcare providers, we want to provide information to you and your supervisors about working during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is a coronavirus, the same class of virus that caused SARS and MERS. COVID-19 transmission occurs by close contact with a person with COVID -19 via respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing.

Current minimal evidence suggests that pregnant women are no more likely to become infected with COVID-19 than non-pregnant women. Most cases of COVID-19 cause mild to moderate symptoms such as cough and fever. However, a small number of young healthy people (< 45 years old) get severe symptoms, and require hospitalization and potential respiratory support.

We do know some viral illnesses such as Influenza A and B can be more severe in pregnant women than in non-pregnant women. At this point, case reports of pregnant women suggest this is not the case for COVID-19. However, we currently do not have enough evidence to conclusively state that COVID-19 is not worse in the setting of pregnancy.

Pregnant women who are severely ill with any viral illness, such as the flu, can have complications during pregnancy, such as preterm delivery. We do not yet know if this happens more frequently with COVID-19.

Thus far, most of the data regarding COVID-19 does not suggest a risk of vertical transmission, through the passage of the virus from the mother to the baby during pregnancy, labor or breast feeding. In the limited case series published, the virus has not been detected in amniotic fluid and none of the babies have tested positive immediately after birth. The limited data on breastfeeding have not shown transmission through breast milk. Antibodies against COVID-19 have been detected in breast milk, which may offer some protection to the baby. It is recommended that a breastfeeding woman, who tests positive for COVID-19:

- use a mask when feeding or pumping
- breast and hand washing before and after feeding/pumping
- keep breasts covered to avoid respiratory secretions
- if pumping, use a dedicated breast pump, wipe surfaces of bottles/pumps and consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant

We make the following recommendations to pregnant women who are members of our healthcare team:

- You may continue to work in the clinical setting, and adhere to standard contact and airborne precautions.
- The CDC and NMH recommends you avoid caring for patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection or suspected/patients under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. This is based on the CDC's risk assessment and infection control guidelines.
- Limited exposure is especially important during higher risk procedures (aerosol-generating procedures, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, intubation, extubation, bronchoscopy, nebulizer therapy and sputum induction).

- You should follow strict infection control guidelines for contact and airborne precautions for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, including the use of eye protection, gown, gloves and a mask for close contact. Close contacts for healthcare exposures is defined as within six (6) feet for a prolonged period of time for greater than 15 minutes.
- **If you think that you have had an exposure to coronavirus either at home or work, or feel that you have symptoms, notify your supervisor and contact the NM COVID-19 hotline (312.47.COVID) for further guidance. Symptomatic healthcare workers are able to receive COVID-19 testing at the alternative testing sites.**
- If you develop a temperature of 100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C or higher and a cough, gastrointestinal symptoms, or difficulty breathing, stay home from work and promptly notify your supervisor. **Contact the COVID hotline (312.47.COVID) for further guidance on screening for COVID-19.**

We make the following recommendations to lactating women who are members of our healthcare team:

- You may continue to work in the clinical setting, and adhere to standard contact and airborne precautions. You should follow strict infection control guidelines for contact and airborne precautions for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 as described above.
- **If you think that you have had an exposure to coronavirus either at home or work, or feel that you have symptoms, notify your supervisor and contact the COVID hotline (312.47.COVID) for further guidance. Symptomatic healthcare workers and symptomatic breast feeding women are able to receive COVID testing at the alternative testing sites.**
- It is recommended that a breastfeeding woman who tests positive for COVID-19:
 - Use a mask when feeding or pumping
 - Breast and hand washing before and after feeding/pumping
 - Keep breasts covered to avoid respiratory secretions
 - If pumping, use a dedicated breast pump, wipe surfaces of bottles/pumps and consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant

We encourage you to speak with your immediate supervisor to determine if it is possible for you to work remotely or in a lower risk area, such as the outpatient setting. We understand that this option may not be possible for many members of our healthcare team.

As everyone knows, this is an evolving situation. Additional or revised recommendations will be provided as new information leads us to change or update our current recommendations.

NM COVID 19 Resources

NM COVID Website: <https://nmi.nmh.org/wcs/page/nm-coronavirus>

PPE Donning and Doffing refresher videos:

- Donning: <https://vimeo.com/395838179/a479cbfbcd>
- Doffing: <https://vimeo.com/395837182/161dfdd280>

References/ Resources

CDC Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html>

Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

SMFM COVID-19 Website: <https://WWW.smfm.org/covid19>