

## BACKGROUND

COVID-19 is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. Currently, the research on the risks of COVID-19 during pregnancy is limited. While there is no scientific proof that pregnant people are more likely to get COVID-19, the bodily changes that occur during pregnancy may put pregnant women at a higher risk for infections, including viral respiratory infections like COVID-19.

Pregnant women should take [precautions](#) to prevent exposure to the virus and use the same steps to protect their families. These include washing your hands often with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes with your elbow and not your hands, cleaning surfaces like countertops, light switches and cell phones frequently, social distancing, wearing a mask in public and staying away from sick people.

## IF I GET COVID-19, CAN IT BE PASSED TO MY BABY?

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads. It is unclear whether COVID-19 can be passed to a fetus during pregnancy. In the cases of infants born to mothers with COVID-19, none have tested positive for the virus. In these cases, which are small in number the virus was not detected in amniotic fluid or breastmilk. However, research in this area is extremely limited.

## SHOULD I KEEP MY PRENATAL AND WELL-BABY APPOINTMENTS?

It is important to take steps to ensure the health of yourself and your baby during pregnancy, including receiving prenatal care and making well-baby appointments. Your healthcare provider or pediatrician will help you make decisions on prenatal care and well-baby visits. Talk to them about your COVID-19-related concerns and take their advice to ensure you are staying safe during and after pregnancy. If you are not comfortable going to an appointment in person, talk to your health care provider about alternative options like telehealth, or virtual prenatal appointments.

## SHOULD I CHANGE MY BIRTH PLAN?

If you are considering changes to your birth plan, discuss your options with your health care provider. Hospitals across Pennsylvania continue to be safe places for delivery and are taking every precaution to protect the health of patients and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Preventive measures may include screening visitors and birthing support persons, requiring personal protective equipment and limiting movement in the hospital. If you have questions about specific policies being implemented in your birthing hospital, contact your health care provider. Other delivery options, such as home birth, may pose health and safety risks for both the birth mother and infant, so it is important to discuss those options with a health care provider before making a decision.

## WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN?

Managing stress and anxiety and maintaining mental health during and after pregnancy can be challenging, especially during this time. Along with usual recommendations such as healthy eating, exercise and sleep, make sure you are staying connected with friends and family, over the phone or online; taking breaks from COVID-19-related news and social media; and talking to your health care provider if you are feeling sad or anxious.

- If you or someone you know needs help, text **PA to 741-741** to connect with a crisis counselor 24/7 or call **1-855-284-2494** to reach the Department of Human Service's Mental Health Support Line.
- For support with postpartum depression, call **1-800-944-4773** or text **503-894-9453** to connect with a support person from Postpartum Support International.
- For more information and resources on pregnancy, visit our [website](#)

For more information about COVID-19, visit the [Department of Health](#) and the [CDC](#)

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