



CORONAVIRUS (COVID -19)

Information for Pregnant women and their Families

The World Health Organization has declared Europe as the current “epicentre” of the global coronavirus, (March 13. 2020).

What is Coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) is a new strain of coronavirus causing COVID-19, it was first identified in Wuhan city, China.

How is it transmitted?

The virus appears to spread rapidly through respiratory or faecal methods and through fomite (these are materials that carry infection, i.e clothes, utensils, furniture).

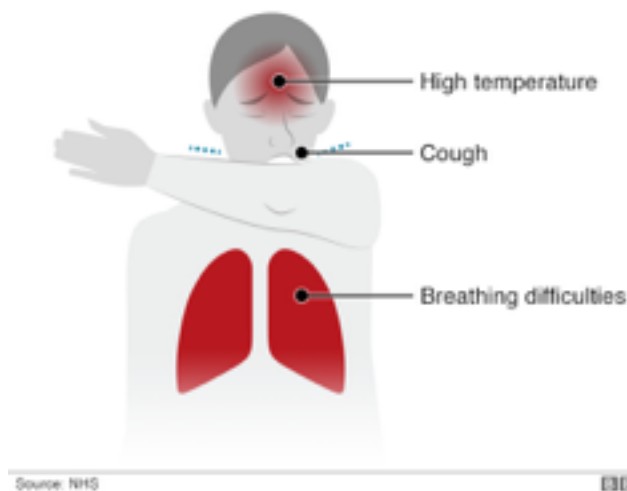
What are the symptoms?

Coronavirus infects the lungs. It is characterised by flu like symptoms. The symptoms often start with a sore throat, headache and body aches, followed by a fever and dry cough, which can lead to breathing problems. Nausea and diarrhoea have also been reported.(NHS 2020).

Scientists say it takes five days on average to start showing the symptoms, but some people will get the symptoms much later than this.

The incubation period last up to 14 days (WHO.2020), but some research suggests it may be up to 24 days.

Coronavirus: Key symptoms



Effects on The Mother.

It appears that the majority of women will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu like symptoms. Although more severe symptoms are more likely to occur in the older population, the immunosuppressed, people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and pre-existing lung conditions. There is always the possibility that more severe symptoms could occur in pregnant women, in this case it needs to be identified and treated promptly.(RCOG. March 2020)

Effect on The Fetus

There is currently no data suggesting an increased risk of miscarriage or early pregnancy loss in relation to COVID-19.women.

There is no evidence of intrauterine fetal infection to date, and therefore unlikely to be congenital effects of the virus on fetal development.

There is some data to suggest that there have been some premature deliveries from women infected with coronavirus, but it is not clear whether this was because of maternal indications related to the infection or fetal compromise (RCOG. March 2020)

How to reduce the risk of Coronavirus Infection.

1. Frequently clean hands by using alcohol -based hand rub, or soap and water.
 2. When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue- throw tissue away immediatley and wash your hands
 3. Avoid close contact with anyone that has a fever and cough
- (World Health Organization,2020)

How to HandWash-World Health Organization(WHO)



General Advice

1. Wash your hands frequently and always before eating
2. Avoid crowded places and public transport where possible
3. If possible work from home
4. Avoid touching your eyes and nose.

What to do If you think you have been infected with the coronavirus

1. Stay at home.
2. Inform your frauenarzt and hebamme by telephone or email. DO NOT visit the clinic.

3. Notify the responsible health department. This can be done by calling 116117
4. You will be tested by having a swab taken from your mouth and throat.

What to do if you have been advised to self isolate

1. Stay at home , do not go to work, school, public areas, do not use public transport or taxis
2. Seperate yourself from other people in your home-you should stay in a well ventilated room, where possible use a different bathroom from the rest of the household. Where this is not possible the infected person uses the bathroom last and then thoroughly cleans the bathroom themselves. Ensure the isolated person uses seperate towels.
3. Call ahead before visiting a doctor
4. Cover your coughs and sneezes
5. Wash your hands frequently
6. Avoid sharing household items

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/> accessed 05 March 2020.

Care In Labour

If you have been tested positive for COVID-19 it is advised to call the hospital in early labour. This way they are able to prepare for your arrival.

Once admitted you will be looked after as any other patient with an infectious disease would be. You will have a seperate room and hospital staff who are looking after you will put on special gowns and masks when they come into your room.

Maternal observations to include temperature, respiratory and oxygen saturations will be monitored regualry.

The current recommendation is for continous fetal monitoring in labour, this may alter when more evidence becomes available.

Currently there is no evidence that spinal or epiduarl anaesthesia is contra-indicated in the presense of COVID -19.

At present there is no evidence to suggest that one mode of birth is preferred; therefore mode of birth should not be influenced by COVID -19. This would change if the women's respiratory condition demands urgent delivery.

Postnatal Management

All babies of women who are suspected or confirmed with COVID-19 need to be tested. Babies whose mother has tested positve for the virus will be monitored carefully.

Breast feeding and Coronavirus

Current evidence shows that the virus is not transferred to the breastmilk, but there are only limited studies, so this should be treated with caution.

The Royal College of Midwives and Royal College of Obstetricians current guidelines say that In the light of the current evidence, the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breastmilk. The main risk for the infants of breastfeeding is the

close contact with mother who is likely to share infective airborne droplets. It is important to remember that this guidance may change as knowledge evolves.

For women who wish to breastfeed precautions should be take to limit viral spread:

1. Hand washing before touching the baby, breast pump or bottle
2. Try and avoid, coughing or sneezing whilst feeding your baby
3. Consider wearing face mask for feeding at the breast
4. Follow recommendations for cleaning pump

References and for more information.

Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe e. V.

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists © 2020

Royal College of Midwives.UK 2020

Hebammenverband. De 2020

World Health Organisation 2020

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>