Washington State Department of Health

Pregnancy, Birth, and Caring for Your Baby with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

Every day, we are learning more about the disease caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) and how to care for people during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. As we learn more, recommendations may change, but this is what we know now.

Having COVID-19 during pregnancy

What we know

Pregnant people may be at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and should do what they can to stay healthy and avoid getting COVID-19.

It's always important to protect yourself from illness during pregnancy so complications don't develop.

Talk with your healthcare provider if you are sick or think you have been around someone who has COVID-19.

Call 9-1-1 if you experience any of the following symptoms

- Trouble breathing (more than what has been normal for you during pregnancy)
- Ongoing pain or pressure in the chest
- Sudden confusion
- Being unable to respond to others
- Blue lips or face

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LABOR & BIRTH with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

If you have COVID-19 (coronavirus), talk with your healthcare provider about what will happen during labor, delivery, and postpartum. After your baby is born, it is possible for your baby to get sick with COVID-19. Discuss your options with your healthcare team and make a decision that feels right to you.

Your provider may recommend one of the following:

You and your baby stay in the same room together

- If you stay in the same room, wear a face mask or cloth face covering and wash your hands before holding or being close to your baby.

You and your baby stay in separate rooms

- Your provider may recommend that a person who is not sick care for your baby until you are no longer able to pass COVID-19 to other people.

CARING FOR YOUR BABY AT HOME with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

If you have COVID-19 when you and your baby go home from the hospital, you may need to take precautions to prevent passing it to your baby. Discuss your options with your healthcare team and make a decision that feels right to you.

Your provider may recommend one of the following when you go home from the hospital:

You and your baby stay in the same room together at your home

- If you stay in the same room, you can help protect your baby from getting COVID-19 by wearing a face mask or cloth face covering and washing your hands before holding or being close to your baby.
- Talk with your provider about when you can stop wearing a face mask or cloth face covering and washing your hands when caring for your baby.

You and your baby stay in separate rooms in your home

- Your provider may recommend that a person who is not sick care for your baby until you are no longer able to pass COVID-19 to other people.
- Talk with your provider about when you and your baby can stop staying in separate rooms.

FEEDING YOUR BABY with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

While you have COVID-19, wear a face mask or cloth face covering and wash your hands before nursing, formula feeding, or bottle-feeding human milk (breastmilk) to protect your baby.

Nursing

Feeding your baby human milk (breast-milk) is recommended. It contains cells that protect babies from getting sick and supports healthy growth and development.

Nursing causes the release of a hormone (oxytocin) that helps you and your baby bond with each other. Nursing also has these benefits:

- Helps slow postpartum bleeding
- Helps with postpartum depression
- Calms the breastfeeding parent and the baby
- Fosters growth and healing in your baby

Human milk (breastmilk) protects babies from many illnesses including:

- Diarrhea and a sick stomach
- Problems with breathing
- Infections (sepsis)
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Ear infections
- Bladder infections

RESOURCES

doh.wa.gov/coronavirus
or **coronavirus.wa.gov**

Bottle-feeding

You, your partner, or another caregiver can swaddle and cuddle your infant while bottle-feeding formula or human milk (breastmilk). This helps with:

- Bonding between the caregiver and your baby
- Calms the caregiver and your baby
- Fosters growth and healing in your baby

A person who is not sick can feed your human milk (breastmilk) to your baby. Babies that are bottle-fed human milk get all of the nutrition benefits that come from nursing.

- Wash your hands and wear a face mask or cloth face covering when pumping.
- Wash your hands and wear a face mask or cloth face covering before cleaning your pump, bottles, and milk storage containers. While you have COVID-19, you should wash your pumping equipment before and after you pump.

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