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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If You Are Pregnant, Breastfeeding, or Caring for Young Children

Protect yourself and your family from COVID-19



Although there are currently no data showing that COVID-19 affects pregnant people differently than others, we do know that pregnant people are at greater risk of getting sick from other respiratory viruses than people who are not pregnant. Sometimes, this causes adverse outcomes for the mother or child. Therefore, if you are pregnant, be mindful about reducing your risk of getting sick. You can also teach your children everyday steps (such as proper handwashing) to stay healthy:

Practice social distancing.

- Avoid people who are sick or who have been exposed to the virus.
- Stay at home or stay at least 6 feet away from people who do not live in your home.

Wash your hands often.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or help your children wash their hands), especially:
 - After touching other people, including children;
 - After touching surfaces outside your home or items from outside that you have brought into your home;
 - After going to the bathroom or changing diapers;
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
 - After handling dirty laundry;
 - Before eating or preparing food; and
 - Before breastfeeding or expressing milk.
- Always wash your hands when they are visibly dirty.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and then wash your hands. Or, cough into your elbow and clean your hands.

Clean, disinfect, and launder safely.

- Clean and then disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., phones, personal electronic devices, remote controls, tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles).
 - Be sure to follow instructions for safely and effectively using disinfectants, including directions for rinsing off the chemicals after a period of time. In addition, be sure to keep products out of reach of children.
- Launder items, including washable plush toys, by following the label or instructions. Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely, if possible. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items, but wash your hands after handling the dirty laundry.

Related: [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)

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](#).

Risk of COVID-19 during pregnancy

Based on what we know about COVID-19, we believe **pregnant people appear to have the same risk of COVID-19 as adults who are not pregnant**. However, much remains unknown. We do know that pregnant people have had a higher risk of severe illness when infected with viruses that are similar to COVID-19, as well as other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza.

We also know that pregnant people have changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infections. Therefore, if you are pregnant, it is always important for you to try to protect yourself from illnesses whenever possible.

Risks to the pregnancy and to the baby

Much is still unknown about the risks of COVID-19 to the pregnancy and to the baby.

- Mother-to-child transmission of COVID-19 during pregnancy is unlikely. However, after birth, a newborn can be infected after being in close contact with an infected person, including the baby's mother or other caregivers.
- A small number of babies have tested positive for the virus shortly after birth, according to limited published reports. However, it is unknown if these babies got the virus before, during, or after birth.
- A small number of other problems, such as preterm birth, have been reported in babies born to mothers who tested positive for COVID-19 late in their pregnancy. However, we do not know if these problems were related to the virus.

Prenatal and postpartum care during the COVID-19 pandemic

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.**

Vaccines during pregnancy and the COVID-19 pandemic

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.

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.

Breastfeeding if you have COVID-19

- 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 before each feeding.
- If you have COVID-19 and choose to express breast milk:
 - Use a dedicated breast pump.
 - Wear a cloth face covering during expression and wash your hands 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.

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.

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?](#)

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