

COVID-19 Information

Answers and Resources for Pregnancy and Post-Partum

The following are answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19 and ways to help keep your family safe.

- **What do we know about COVID-19 and pregnancy? Is it easier for pregnant women to become ill with the disease? If they become infected, will they be sicker than other people?**

Based on what is known at this time, pregnant people might be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Additionally, there may be an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm birth, among pregnant people with COVID-19. If you are pregnant, it is especially important for you and those you live with to protect yourselves from getting COVID-19. If you are caring for children, teach them everyday steps (such as proper handwashing) to help them stay healthy and protect yourself and your family.

The best ways to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 are to limit your interactions with other people as much as possible and take precautions (see infographic at end of this document) to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others.

Monitor yourself for symptoms. (See below.) If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, call your healthcare provider within 24 hours.

- **What additional steps should I take?**
 - Do not skip your prenatal or postpartum care appointments and receive recommended vaccines. (Note: There is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19).
 - Make sure that you have at least a 30-day supply of your medicines.
 - Talk to your healthcare provider about how to stay healthy and take care of yourself during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest [community health center](#) or [health department](#).
 - Call your healthcare provider if you have any questions related to your health.
 - Seek care immediately if you have a medical emergency.
 - Learn about [stress and coping](#). You may feel increased stress during this pandemic. Reach out for help if fear and anxiety are overwhelming and cause strong emotions.
- **What if I have to go out?**

You and the people you live with should ensure you are taking steps to protect yourselves and others. In general, the more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them, and the longer that interaction, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19.

- Consider avoiding activities where taking protective measures may be difficult, such as activities where social distancing (staying 6 feet from others) can't be maintained.
 - If you decide to engage in public activities, continue to protect yourself by practicing everyday preventive actions.
 - Keep these items on hand and use them when venturing out: a cloth face covering, tissues, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - If possible, avoid others who are not wearing cloth face coverings or ask others around you to wear cloth face coverings.
- **Is it safe to go to the doctor? What about delivering my baby?**
 - If you are concerned about attending an 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 (appointments over the phone or video).
 - 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.
 - 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.

- **Is it safe to breastfeed?**

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.

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.

If you have COVID-19 and choose to breastfeed:

- Wear a cloth face covering while breastfeeding and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before each feeding.

If you have COVID-19 and choose to express breast milk:

- Use a dedicated breast pump (not shared).
- Wear a cloth face covering during expression and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds 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.

Parents and other caregivers should follow recommendations described in the [Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings](#).

Other recommended precautions:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water each time before touching your baby, preparing a bottle for breast milk (or formula), touching your pump or bottle parts, or expressing milk.
- Women with COVID-19 should remain isolated from other members of the family except to breastfeed.
- If you are unable to produce milk during this time, you can use formula following the same cleaning precautions to prevent spread of infection.
- Remember, homemade baby formula recipes online and on social media are NOT recommended and can be dangerous for your baby.

If you have questions, contact your local WIC clinic for further guidance or call 1-844-601-0365 to connect with your closest WIC clinic. You can also reach out to the Appalachian Breastfeeding Network Statewide 24/7 Hotline at 1-888-588-3423.

- **Should children wear cloth face coverings?**

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.

Plastic face shields also are NOT recommended for newborns and infants. 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.

- **What if I have COVID-19 when my baby is born?**

Newborns can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 after being in close contact with an infected person. Some babies have tested positive for the virus shortly after birth. It is unknown if these babies got the virus before, during, or after birth. Much is still unknown about the risks of COVID-19 to newborns. Most newborns who have tested positive for COVID-19 had mild or no symptoms and have recovered fully. However, there are a few reports of newborns with severe illness. A small number of other problems, such as preterm (early) birth and other problems with pregnancy and birth, have been reported in babies born to mothers who tested positive for COVID-19. We do not know if these problems are related to the virus.

The federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recognizes that the ideal setting for the care of a healthy, full-term newborn in the hospital is within the mother's room. Temporary separation of the newborn from a mother with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be considered to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to the newborn. The risks and benefits of temporary separation of the mother from her newborn should be discussed with the mother by her healthcare team. Decisions about temporary separation should be made with respect to the mother's wishes.

If the mother with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 does not choose temporary separation in the hospital, she should take precautions to avoid spreading the virus to the newborn, including washing her hands and wearing a

cloth face covering when within 6 feet of her newborn. The newborn should be kept at least 6 feet away from the mother, as much as possible, including through the use of physical barriers (e.g., placing the newborn in an incubator).

Mothers who are discharged from the hospital but have not met criteria to discontinue isolation may choose to continue to separate from the newborn at home to reduce the risk of spreading the virus, if a healthy caregiver is available. If a healthy caregiver is not available, a mother with COVID-19 can still care for her infant if she is well enough while using precautions (for example, hand washing, wearing a cloth face covering).

- **What if my child becomes sick with COVID-19?**

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.

- **What are the symptoms?**

You may have COVID-19 if you have fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; or diarrhea. Symptoms can range from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

SAFE SLEEP AND 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:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water each time before touching your baby, preparing a bottle for breast milk (or formula), touching your pump or bottle parts, or expressing milk.
- 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.

Updated July 1, 2020.

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking these precautions.

PREVENTION

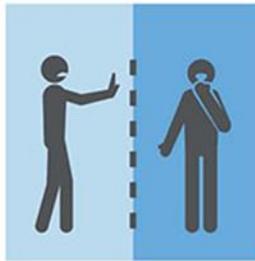
For additional information call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.



STAY HOME EXCEPT FOR WORK AND OTHER NEEDS



WEAR A FACE COVERING WHEN GOING OUT



PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING OF AT LEAST 6 FEET FROM OTHERS



SHOP AT NON-PEAK HOURS



WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH WATER AND SOAP (20 SECONDS OR LONGER)



AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS OR AFTER TOUCHING SURFACES



COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR SLEEVE WHEN COUGHING OR SNEEZING



CLEAN AND DISINFECT "HIGH-TOUCH" SURFACES OFTEN



DON'T WORK WHEN SICK



CALL BEFORE VISITING YOUR DOCTOR

STOP GERMS WASH YOUR HANDS

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Ohio | Department of Health