



2020

# Maternity Care During Coronavirus Outbreak: Information for Service Users



## University Hospital of North Tees and Hartlepool

### Maternity Care

*This patient information resource has been created using the best, evidence-based guidance that we have available to us at the time of writing. We will update the electronic resource held on our maternity website with any newly emerging national guidance as it arises. 27/11/20*

***This leaflet provides you with information regarding the adjustments to your maternity care during the Coronavirus outbreak.***

We are working hard to ensure that you continue to receive safe and supportive maternity care during your pregnancy and birth. You and your family are at the heart of every decision that we make.

**A reminder that anyone with a:**

- **high temperature**
  - **new, persistent cough (a cough that won't go away)**
  - **or a loss of, or change to your sense of smell or taste, please:**
- DO NOT attend for your hospital appointment, scan or community midwife appointment. These can be rearranged following self-isolation
  - Follow government self-isolation advice [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/) =
  - Contact your community Midwife if you need to re-arrange your appointment with them, or the antenatal clinic to rearrange a consultant/doctor appointment

We know that you will be worried about what the impact of this virus means for you and your baby. The evidence we have indicates that if exposed to coronavirus, pregnant women are unlikely to experience severe illness and that you will instead have only mild or moderate flu like symptoms.

**We recommend that you follow government advice to stay at home, which means:**

- Wash your hands regularly
- Follow the advice in social distancing – such as staying at home as much as possible
- Stay away from anyone in your home who has symptoms of coronavirus

**HANDS-FACE-SPACE**

You still need to go to all of your pregnancy (antenatal) scans and appointments you are told to.

**If you are a key worker as deemed by the Government and are pregnant, please seek advice from your employer about attending the workplace.**

For the most up to date, evidence-based responses to the most commonly asked questions of pregnant families or new parents, we recommend that you visit:

- Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in pregnancy [www.rcog.org.uk](http://www.rcog.org.uk)
- [Message to pregnant women from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/professional-bodies-response-to-government-advice-for-pregnant-women-to-self-isolate/](http://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/professional-bodies-response-to-government-advice-for-pregnant-women-to-self-isolate/)
- <https://www.rcm.org.uk/advice-for-pregnant/women/>
- [www.rcog.org.uk](http://www.rcog.org.uk)
- Call UHNT maternity day assessment line **01642 624239**

**\*we will endeavour to respond as soon as possible but please be aware that we are experiencing a high volume of enquiries. If the line is busy, please try again later.**

## Community Midwifery Appointments

If you are newly pregnant, you can self-refer for maternity care using our online self-referral form. This can be found on our maternity internet page:

<https://www.nth.nhs.uk/services/maternity-form/>

**Your first midwife appointment** “booking appointment” will be undertaken over the telephone. This phone call will likely last around an hour during which we will ask lots of questions as well as sharing some advice with you. Part of this advice will be in relation to the early pregnancy screening tests that we will provide should you choose to have them. Screening information is available on our internet page for reference in advance or from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby-description-in-brief>

**It is very important that you read and download this leaflet before your booking appointment**

### Following your telephone booking:

- 15-minute appointment will be arranged where you will be weighed, have your blood pressure taken and a urine sample collected, as well as any blood samples for screening tests you have verbally consented to.
- You will also be provided with your pregnancy notes at this clinic.
- an appointment will be arranged for you to have your first scan (Dating Scan).
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**Please DO NOT attend any clinic appointments if you have a high temperature or new persistent cough, or a loss of, or change to your sense of smell or taste. Please attend alone unless you need support from a carer**

We will try to ensure that the majority of your appointments will be face to face in one of our antenatal clinics. However, in times of increased restrictions due to covid-19, telephone consultations may be required. Your community Midwife will keep you informed of these clinics will be based in a number of locations; your community midwife will inform you of the location to attend.

**However, if you have any concerns, please contact your community midwife.**

We respectfully ask that **if you are feeling unwell, or another member of your household is or has recently been unwell with a temperature or persistent cough, or a loss of, or change to your sense of smell or taste that you follow government advice to stay at home and call 111 for advice.** This is to protect your pregnant peers, their families and our healthcare workers. Please call your midwife to arrange an alternative appointment and we will continue to support you.

**You will be offered testing for coronavirus if you are admitted to the maternity unit for any reason.**

Please attend your appointments alone and at your allotted time. Partners, friends, relatives and children will not be admitted into the building unless they have a carer role. We are aware that the new visiting policies might feel uncomfortable, but please know that we have implemented them for your safety and in line with government advice.

## Your Appointments

Your midwife will be able to advise you of your personalised care plan at your booking appointment. This will include the pathway of appointments that you will receive including Consultant appointments, scans in addition to your routine appointments.

If your medical history or current pregnancy means that you are having shared care with a midwife and an Obstetrician, you may have either a phone appointment with your Consultant or still be required to attend a hospital appointment. You will receive a phone call/letter to confirm the date, time and location of your appointment.

You may be required to start medication after your booking appointment if you have any known risk factors for developing pregnancy related complications. Some of these medications can be purchased at a pharmacy, your midwife can advise you, otherwise a prescription for this medication will be arranged for you to collect from your GP or local pharmacy by your community midwife.

## Your Scans

### Dating Scan

Your partner will be able to attend the last 5 minutes of this scan, where all of the explanations will be offered to you both. Please enter the unit alone initially and ask your

partner to wait outside. They will also be required to wear a mask for this appointment, and will be asked screening questions relating to symptoms of covid-19.

## Anomaly Scan

We are happy to be able to offer an opportunity for one adult birth partner to attend for your scan, usually performed around 20-22 weeks. Again we ask that you ask your partner to wait outside until called into the department, so that we can ensure that social distancing is possible for you and our staff. They will also be required to wear a mask for this appointment, and will be asked screening questions relating to symptoms of covid-19. In order to be able to facilitate this, scan appointments may take a little longer as we need to continue with our vigorous cleaning protocols in between each appointment. This means that you may be asked to attend for your scan in one of our departments based at Hartlepool.

**Please DO NOT attend any clinic appointments/Scan if you have a high temperature or new persistent cough, or a loss of, or change to your sense of smell or taste.**

If you require additional scans to the routine screening tests which are around 12 and 20 weeks, your midwife will inform you of the adjusted scan schedule at your booking appointment. These will be specific to your individual needs. At this time, we are unable to support partners accompanying you at these extra scans.

## Maternity Assessment Unit:

If you are concerned about you or your baby's wellbeing, then please call a member of our team on **01642 624239**. You will be given advice to attend for review only if we feel that is the safest choice for you and your baby. Alternatively, a midwife or doctor may be able to advise you over the phone.

If you need to attend the Maternity Assessment Unit please attend alone, unless you require the support of a carer, at the time given to you. You will be triaged prior to attending regarding any coronavirus symptoms.

The antenatal day assessment unit in Hartlepool is available Monday to Friday by appointment, while the unit at North Tees site is available seven days a week.

## Antenatal Classes

Following government advice, we have suspended all group sessions such as parent education and breast feeding workshops and will not be providing any tours of the hospital facilities during this time.

Please check our maternity internet page for a videoed tour of our Delivery suite at North Tees. There is also a range of parent craft education videos we have filmed to help your journey to parenthood. A list of useful, evidence based online resources can be found at the end of this document.

## Care in Labour

When you are experiencing signs of labour at home, please call our **Delivery Suite/ Ward 18/19 on: 01642 382718**

We will continue to do everything that we can to respect your birth choices. Some of our birthing options have been impacted by coronavirus. We are happy to welcome one well, adult, birth partner at any stage of your labour.

## Homebirths

From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 we re-instated the Home birth service within our area. Your community midwife will contact you if you have previously expressed a wish to have your baby at home.

Home births are extremely safe if you have a low risk pregnancy and we have introduced new measures to ensure that you and your family, and our staff have reduced risk of transmission of the corona virus while in your home.

There will be open and honest conversations with you regarding what you can expect and what measures we need from you to be able to plan your home birth.

## Pain relief in labour

You can still use Entonox (gas & air), pethidine or diamorphine and have an epidural or spinal if required.

Please be aware that if you choose to have an epidural during labour then you may experience a delay in this being available to you while our anaesthetic services are under additional pressure in the hospital.

If you are symptomatic of coronavirus or we have staffing concerns due to coronavirus, then you will not be able to have a water birth. Additional advice can be found at; <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pain-relief-labour/>

## Induction of labour

If you are booked to come into hospital for an induction of labour, you will be asked to call at a designated date/time in advance. The midwife will inform you of the current bed status and the time that we would like you to attend.

Information about the induction process will be provided by the community midwife or doctor when they book your induction and will be personalised to you.

Please click on the link to read our leaflet on induction of labour;

<https://www.nth.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2017/09/Mat537-induction-of-labour-leaflet.pdf>

We are happy to welcome one adult, nominated birth partner on arrival for induction of labour. They are welcome to stay as your induction of labour is commenced, this is usually for 1 hour. There will then be allocated visiting slots on subsequent days, for this partner only throughout your stay, which will be arranged with the Midwife in charge. This will be 1-2pm or 6-7pm. Your birth partner will then be invited to join you when your labour has commenced. Screening swabs for COVID-19 will be taken on admission for induction of labour, if not already done so.

## Planned caesareans births

If you are booked to come into hospital for a planned caesarean birth you will have a pre-operative appointment at around 36 weeks. At this appointment you will be advised of a date and time to attend the hospital. You will be asked to attend 1 days before your planned delivery date to have pre-op bloods and COVID-19 Screening swabs taken. We ask for your patience and understanding that this date and time may be subject to change in the interest of maintaining your safety and facilitating our service at this challenging time.

**You will be limited to one well birth partner during your birth.**

## Your postnatal stay

If you have an uncomplicated birth and are deemed fit for discharge, you and your baby will be able to go home at around 6 hours after birth.

If you require any additional support, you will be admitted to the postnatal ward. Any women ***symptomatic of coronavirus or positive*** will be isolated with their baby until discharge.

The well recognised benefits of breastfeeding far outweigh any potential risk of coronavirus transmission. There is no evidence that the virus crosses into breastmilk. What we do know is that breastmilk can provide protection against many other infections. You will be supported with your feeding choice during your hospital stay.

**In line with hospital and government restrictions, your birth partner will be able to visit between 10 am /8pm however if they leave during this time they will not be permitted to return. We are unable to support overnight stays for partners at present. We are sorry for any distress that this may cause, it is in the interest of your family's safety**

## Your hospital stay

Your midwife will wear additional protective clothing including a face mask, gloves and apron during your birth. We want you to know that we are smiling under the mask.

If you have symptoms, tested positive or are self-isolating during labour, you will be cared for in a room allocated for use during the pandemic, but with the continuous support of our midwives and Doctors

We have introduced new protocols to follow when caring for a person with symptoms of and those that have confirmed coronavirus. These involve putting on enhanced protective equipment.

During your stay, you are respectfully asked to avoid close contact with anyone other than the staff caring for you. In line with government advice, the hospital canteen and shops have been closed to the public. Therefore, please ensure that you bring snacks and anything that you require for your inpatient stay with you. You will be provided with hospital meals during your stay.

**We are happy to be able to continue to support the presence of birthing partners on our delivery suite and antenatal/postnatal ward, however there is a strict no visiting policy in all other areas of the hospital**

## Your postnatal community care

Wherever possible we aim to provide in person community Midwife appointments to ensure the wellbeing of you and your baby. This will ideally be performed in a postnatal clinic at a base near to you, but can be performed in your home if you feel unable to travel. Should you have required a caesarean section or are too unwell to attend the hospital, the community Midwife will visit you at home. We ask that you look at our leaflet on preparing for a home visit to keep everyone safe.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/B5mSUzMMXh77Thp77>

Postnatal care will be individualised according to your needs and that of your baby

Your **day 5 appointment** will be in person in a maternity clinic in most cases. Your midwife or midwife support worker will call you to arrange a date and time for this appointment.

Your **day 10 appointment** will be in person in a maternity clinic in most cases. Your midwife or midwife support worker will call you to arrange a date and time for this appointment.

Following this appointment, you will be discharged to the care of the Health visitor.

Please do not call to any of the Children's centres or drop in clinics without an appointment

## Infant Feeding

We want to continue to offer you support to successfully breast feed your baby following discharge from Hospital.

Your community Midwife will contact you after discharge to ensure that you and your baby are well and one of our specially trained Midwifery Assistants will offer support and advice to you remotely.

We will contact you by phone and can offer video calls if needed to support you in your feeding choices.

You will receive similar support from your Health Visiting team should this be required



***You will be able to contact your community midwife until 28 days after the birth of your baby if you require a subsequent visit, telephone consultation or advice please; contact your community midwife.***

**Please attend your appointment alone, arranging care for your baby, unless you need the support of a carer. If you have a temperature or a persistent cough please, or loss of, or a change to taste and smell. DO NOT ATTEND any appointments**

If you are unwell, we will arrange care for you and your baby at home where possible, but please be aware that appointments will usually take place in a clinic setting. We appreciate your support with this and attendance in clinics on time where you are well and able to do so. This will allow us to maintain social distancing and ensure that the more vulnerable can also receive the care that they need.

## **Birth Registration**

Birth registration services are offering an appointment system; you will be provided with details of how to register your baby's birth on discharge from hospital/following home birth. You are now able to register for child benefit or universal credit before you have registered your baby's birth.

## **Exercise and wellbeing**

It is important that you remain active during pregnancy and after your baby has been born. This is for both your physical wellbeing (where inactivity puts you at higher risk of pregnancy related complications such as blood clots) and your mental wellbeing.

Please follow government advice and go outside for light exercise, a walk will be enough. There are also many online video resources to support you with exercise at home.

We recognise that you may be experiencing additional anxiety about you and your baby's health. If you are feeling anxious, down, depressed or hopeless during this difficult time we would like to support you. Please share this with your midwife or any health professional.

The useful resources section at the end of this leaflet includes resources that you might use to help manage your anxiety.

**Help us to look after you by taking care of yourself well. Your health and wellbeing are important to us.**

If you have any further questions after reading this resource that are **non-urgent** and relate to the adjustments to your care as a result of coronavirus, please call your community midwife

Please contact the maternity day assessment unit **01642 624239** for any **urgent** concerns relating to your and your baby's wellbeing.

Community Midwives are to be contacted regarding routine antenatal concerns

<https://www.nth.nhs.uk/services/maternity/community-midwife-contact-numbers/>

## Useful Resources

### Up to date coronavirus advice for pregnant women:

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

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/)

[www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/professional-bodies-response-to-government-advice-for-pregnant-women-to-self-isolate/](http://www.rcog.org.uk/en/news/professional-bodies-response-to-government-advice-for-pregnant-women-to-self-isolate/)

### Birth pain relief options

[www.labourpains.com/home](http://www.labourpains.com/home)

### Health and wellbeing in pregnancy

IMPACT on Teesside [enquiries@impactonteeside.com](mailto:enquiries@impactonteeside.com)

NHS-Every Mind Matters <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>

Looking after your mental health <https://www.wellbeinginfo.org>

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk/](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/)

NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Rethink mental illness [www.rethink.org/](http://www.rethink.org/)

Tommy's [www.tommys.org/](http://www.tommys.org/)

NHS Tees, ESK and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

<https://www.tevv.nhs.uk/services>

Self Help Guides: <http://www.selfhelpguides.ntw.nhs.uk/teww/>

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/) [www.gov.uk/](http://www.gov.uk/)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-andwellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mentalhealth-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

[https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid19/guide\\_to\\_living\\_with\\_worry\\_and\\_anxiety\\_a\\_midst\\_global\\_uncertainty\\_en-us.pdf](https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_a_midst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf)

<https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/>

### Bonding and Feeding

[www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendlyresources/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendlyresources/)

<https://globalhealthmedia.org/videoa/breastfeeding/>

## Parenthood Education

Information for pregnant women

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/advice-for-pregnant-women/>

<https://solihullapproachparenting.com/covid-19-free-online-antenatal-course>

Check out the NHS Choices link for information around pregnancy, birth and what to expect:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby>

Antenatal and postnatal education and Support North east Facebook group

ICON information

Read the UNICEF Baby Friendly information around Feeding and Caring for your Baby in this colourful leaflet:

[https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/04/happybaby\\_leaflet\\_web.pdf](https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/04/happybaby_leaflet_web.pdf)

Watch these informative videos from UNICEF on Breastfeeding and how to get off to a good start:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources>

If you have chosen Formula or Bottle feed; see these leaflets from First Steps Nutrition and UNICEF:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/bottle-feeding-resources>

Watch the Lullaby Trust Video's on babies and the importance of [Safe Sleeping](#):

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice>

Read this leaflet on helpful and practical advice from UNICEF on how to care for your baby at night:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/sleep-and-night-time-resources/caring-for-your-baby-at-night/>

Keep updated on the importance of taking Vitamin D and breastfeeding:

<http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/dibm/2019-09/Vitamin%20D%20and%20Breastfeeding.pdf>

For up to date information around the coronavirus and breastfeeding, read this leaflet – Breastfeeding Network UK: <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/coronavirus>

**Illness in Newborn babies:**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Information for parents for Newborn babies