



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. 26/05/2020

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/ =
 - Call the advice line on **01642 624223/624376** for further advice around when you need to attend for an 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

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
- [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
- Call UHNT maternity advice line **01642 624223/624376**

***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>

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).

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

Your 16, 25 and 31 week appointments will be omitted or provided by telephone following triage by your community midwife. If it is your first baby, you will be seen at **38 weeks**

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

Your 28, 32, 36 and 40 week appointments will all be face to face in one of our antenatal clinics. These clinics will be based in a number of locations; your community midwife will inform you of the location to attend.

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.

At present, you will only be tested for coronavirus if you are very unwell and admitted to hospital, spontaneous labour, booked for planned caesarean delivery or induction of labour. This may change as the situation evolves.

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.

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

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

Like all other appointments, please attend your scan appointments alone unless you need support from a carer at the time you have been given.

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. Please attend alone unless you need support from a carer

You will be asked to provide a specimen of urine when attending for your 20-22-week scan. Please label it with your name and the name of your community Midwife and leave it in the box provided, this will be tested and any results acted upon.

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.

Maternity Assessment Unit:

If you are concerned about you or your baby's wellbeing, then please call a member of our team on **01642 624223/624376**. 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 on Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays, while the unit at North Tees 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 the video unit tour. 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 maternity triage on **01642 624223/624376** or **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 have to limit you to one well birth partner during your active labour and birth.

Homebirths

Due to the current pressure regarding COVID -19 North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust are currently suspending the provision of the home birth service from 1 April 2020 in order to ensure that safety of both our staff and the women and families within our care. This will be reviewed regularly and the home birth service reinstated as soon as possible. Our Community Midwives have contacted those women booked for Home Births directly to discuss their options.

We aim to make a home from home environment within our low risk rooms, with minimal medical equipment inside the rooms. All of our rooms on the delivery suite have blinds and mood lights, together with balls and mats to aid us to create a positive birth environment. All delivery rooms have ensuite facilities.

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.

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>

Please attend your induction appointment alone unless you require the support of a carer. Your birth partner will be invited to join you when your active 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

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 postnatal ward, however there is a strict no visiting policy in all other areas of the hospital

Your postnatal community care

Your **first midwife appointment** and **any non-routine appointments** will be provided through telephone triage consultation or face to face appointment. Postnatal care will be individualised according to your needs and that of your baby

Your **day 5 appointment** will be face to face 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 provided through telephone triage consultation or face to face appointment. Following this appointment, you will be discharged to the care of the Health visitor.

Please do not call to any of the Childrens 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.

She will contact you by telephone on your second day after discharge and discuss any concerns that you may have. We advise that you install WHATSAPP on your phone so that, if needed we can give you practical advice via a video call.

The service will run Monday to Friday from 9am – 5 pm. Any Urgent enquiries in this time can telephone 01429 522869. Any Infant feeding problems outside that time, please contact the staff on Ward 22 North Tees on 01642 382722.

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 postnatal 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.

Please call the maternity advice line: 01642 624223/624376 if you have a new persistent cough or a temperature for advice about your wellbeing and ongoing postnatal care.

Birth Registration

Birth registration services are currently closed. 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 your 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 triage **01642 624223/624376** for any **urgent** concerns relating to your and your baby's wellbeing.

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/

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

Health and wellbeing in pregnancy

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/ 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

Bonding and Feeding

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

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

Information for parents for Newborn babies