

# Pregnancy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Frequently Asked Questions

You may have questions about being pregnant or having a baby. The pandemic may have raised new concerns. Here is information that may help.

You should also talk with your doctor, nurse, midwife, or doula regularly to help answer questions. Visit New Jersey's COVID-19 Information Hub at: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>.



## **Q** Am I more at risk for COVID-19 or COVID-19-related problems?

**A** Yes, you are at a higher risk for illnesses when pregnant because of normal changes happening in your body. Also, when you are pregnant and have COVID-19, you are at a higher risk for more serious health issues, like preterm labor or having trouble breathing.

## **Q** What should I do to protect myself from COVID-19?

**A** There are many things you can do to stay safe. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recommend vaccination for people who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant. The CDC also recommends wearing a mask when you are around others, regularly washing your hands, staying away from other people especially if they are sick or have been near someone who has been sick, and social distancing by staying at least 6 feet away from people who don't live with you.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (such as fever, headache, sore throat, shortness of breath, or loss of smell or taste), you should call your doctor right away. Your doctor will help you decide if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

**Q Where can I go to get tested for COVID-19?**

**A** Visit New Jersey's COVID-19 Information Hub (<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing>) for information on testing sites and hours, where to go for free public testing, and a symptom checker tool. You can also call 2-1-1 to find a free testing site near you.



**Q Can I breastfeed? What if I have symptoms of, or tested positive for, COVID-19?**

**A** Yes, you can breastfeed whether you have COVID-19 or not. There is no evidence of COVID-19 being passed to your baby in breastmilk. Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for babies and provides many benefits like bonding, protecting your baby from illnesses and infections, and lifelong health and developmental benefits. Breastfeeding may reduce breast and ovarian cancer risk and can help reduce stress and anxiety.

It is possible for you to pass the virus to your baby through droplets from your breathing. If you have or think you have COVID-19, wash your hands with soap and water before interacting with your baby or touching your breast or breast pump, wear a mask when you are less than 6 feet away from your baby and while breastfeeding or pumping breastmilk, and clean and sanitize breast pumps if pumping breastmilk.



**Q How will care during my pregnancy, labor and delivery, and my birth plan be affected by the pandemic?**

- A** Doctor's offices, hospitals, and birthing places have made changes to make sure that you and your baby will be safe during the pandemic. Some examples include:
- While you are pregnant, for some of your regular visits, you may meet with your doctor, nurse, midwife, or doula using telehealth instead of seeing them in-person.
  - You will be checked for COVID-19 symptoms before your appointments or when you arrive.
  - You will need to wear a mask and everyone who interacts with you at these locations will wear a mask. This protects both you and them.
  - You may not be able to bring other people with you to your appointments. When you are having your baby, you may not be allowed to have visitors other than your support person and a doula.
  - Prenatal classes may be offered online instead of in-person.
  - You may be tested for COVID-19 before you have your baby, depending on the process at your hospital or place you are having your baby.

**Q Is it safe to give birth in a hospital or other birthing place during the pandemic?**

- A** Yes. Hospitals and birthing places are working to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep you safe during the pandemic. You should discuss your plans for delivery with your doctor, nurse, midwife, or doula before making any changes.





**Q** How many people can be with me when I deliver or while I am in the hospital with my baby?

**A** [State law](#) requires hospitals to let you have at least one support person be with you while you have your baby during labor, delivery, and your entire postpartum hospital stay. This law is for all pregnant people, whether or not they have COVID-19. In addition to a support person, a doula can be with you during labor, delivery, and your entire postpartum hospital stay. Your support person and doula cannot be suspected of or have COVID-19. You should plan early for another support person to be with you in case your first support person gets COVID-19.

Additional visitors may not be allowed. You should check visitation rules before delivery.

**Q** Is it safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am planning to get pregnant or if I am already pregnant?

**A** The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) warn that pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people. If you are pregnant, you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy can protect you from severe illness from COVID-19. It is important to talk with your doctor or nurse to learn more about the vaccine. Together, you can decide whether it is right for you.



This publication is supported by the [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#) of the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) as part of an award totaling \$10,361,110.00. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

If you don't have a care provider, find community navigators or contact tracers here: <https://211.unitedway.org/services/covid19>.  
Find language translation and TTY services here: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/caption/>.