

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) & Pregnancy

Brant Community Healthcare System

200 Terrace Hill Street, Brantford, ON

519-751-5544



Brant Community
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus part of a family of viruses that can cause illnesses with symptoms ranging from a mild cold to a more severe respiratory infection

The virus can be spread from person to person through close contact. Unlike other viruses, COVID-19 is highly contagious, that is, very easily spread from person to person.

What are some symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Dry cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Fatigue

If you are feeling unwell, you should return home and self-isolate immediately. You should call Telehealth (1-866-797-0000), Brant County Health Unit (519-753-4937), or the BCHS COVID Hotline (519-751-5818) for further instructions.

If your symptoms are severe, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.



Can I still attend my antenatal appointments?

- Yes, maternity care is considered an essential service
- Please attend your appointments alone
- We ask that you be on time for your appointment so that we can escort you directly into an exam room.
- If you can't be escorted immediately into an exam room you will be asked to return to your car or wait outside
- If you have symptoms of or are suspected/confirmed to have COVID, your routine appointment may be delayed until your self-isolation period is over

What effect does COVID-19 have on pregnant women?

- Compared with the general population, pregnant women do not appear to be at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 specifically, or of becoming more severely unwell with it
- Most pregnant women with a COVID infection will likely experience only mild to moderate cold/flu symptoms
- If you have an underlying health condition such as asthma or diabetes (not gestational diabetes), you may become more ill if you are infected with COVID-19

What effect will COVID-19 have on my baby if I am diagnosed in pregnancy?

- This is a new virus, and we are learning more about it each day. There is currently no evidence to suggest increased risk of miscarriage or fetal abnormalities.
- Limited data suggests an increased risk of preterm delivery and low birthweight, but this may be secondary to several maternal illness.

Will being in self-isolation affect my birthing experience?

- Very few women will be in self-isolation when they go into labour, however, if you are in

self-isolation and go into labour, contact the Birthing Unit to alert them of your arrival at 519-751-5521

- When time comes to deliver your baby, there are special rooms set aside at the hospital (same rooms as regular birthing rooms, but under negative-pressure to reduce risk of viral spread)
- You will be asked to wear personal protective equipment, and the people taking care of you will also be wearing protective equipment
- If you are in self-isolation, please contact your healthcare provider to discuss further details

How will my baby be cared for in hospital if I have suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

- Your baby will be tested after birth
- If you and your baby are both well you will be cared for together in a negative pressure room
- You will talk with your Physician/Midwife and our staff about managing the care of your baby in hospital, including a risk-benefit discussion about skin-to-skin and breastfeeding
- Your support person may be asked to help provide care for the baby
- Always practice respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette when near your baby

What should I expect at the Brantford General Hospital when it comes time to deliver my baby?

- When presenting to the Birthing Unit between 0630 and 2100 hrs, enter the BGH through the D-wing entrance – otherwise use ER entrance
- You will be screened for symptoms there and again upon arrival in the Birthing Unit (Level B3)
- If your screen is positive you will be asked to put a mask on
- During the COVID pandemic hospitals are trying to limit the number of visitors in the building. Your labour support person is the only one who can be with you during your labour, delivery and post-partum stay at BGH. Unfortunately, no visitors are allowed
- We ask that the support person stays with you except for bathroom breaks. Once they leave the building they will be unable to re-enter, except for when they pick you and the baby up on the day of discharge
- Food and drink will be provided for the laboring woman
- If your support person is sick, or has known/suspected COVID-19, we ask they not come with you to the hospital. We strongly encourage you to pre-plan an alternative person to attend your delivery
- All caregivers attending delivery will be wearing personal protective equipment
- Even asymptomatic people can be infected with COVID-19. You may be asked to wear a mask during the pushing stage of labour



Is the Brantford General Hospital prepared for women with COVID?

- Over the past few weeks the Family Birthing Centre team have developed protocols to look after you and your baby should you have COVID on admission
- All efforts will be made to ensure that the two of you are together as much as possible
- The hospital is trying to reduce the number of people visiting all parts of the building, accordingly, only the mother is able to visit with their baby in the nursery

Will I still be able to breast-feed if I have COVID-19?

- Breastfeeding options can be discussed with your healthcare team
- If you have a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection, all precautions should be taken to prevent spread to the baby
- Wash your hands before touching the baby, breast pump or bottles
- Sanitize bottles and breast pump between uses
- Avoid coughing or sneezing on the baby
- Consider wearing a face mask, if available
- If you are too unwell to feed your baby, you can still express or pump breast milk, and ask someone who is well to feed the baby

Updates and new information can be found through the public health unit & CDC website. Please visit:

1. <https://www.healthunit.com/novel-coronavirus#guidance-documents-and-resources>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/maternal-or-infant-illnesses/covid-19-and-breastfeeding.html>
3. <https://www.bchu.org/>



What resources are available during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- The Brant County Health Unit will be phoning you at home after your delivery
- Your 6-week postpartum check-up with your OB may be done over the phone during this time, unless there is a reason you need to be seen in person. Contact your physician or midwife for further details
- For breastfeeding support a public health nurse is available by telephone at 519-753-4937 ext.464
- The Breastfeeding Support Group for indigenous women can be reached at 519-445-4922.
- The Ontario Breastfeeding Support Line can be reached at 1-866-797-0000
- There are numerous resources available for First Nations patients through the Six Nations Birthing Centre at 1-866-446-4922
- Having a new baby can be stressful and many women struggle with mental and emotional health during this time. For mental health support, there are many resources. Please call your healthcare provider if you need additional support.
 - Mental Health Hotline 1-866-531-2600
 - <https://resources.beststart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/M10-E.pdf>
 - www.mentalhealthhelpline.com
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nova Vita continues to offer support for victims of abuse and violence. Please call the 24-hr crisis and support line at 519-752-HELP.

Most experts recommend self-isolating for 14 days after you go home with your baby.



How can I reduce my risk of getting COVID-19?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or tissue
- Disinfect high-touch surfaces with household cleansers or diluted bleach
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are sick
- Practice social distancing: avoid contact with those outside of your immediate family/household

What is self-isolation, social distancing, self-monitoring?

Self-Isolation:

If you have travelled outside of Canada, have symptoms of the virus, are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, you must self-isolate. Stay at home and avoid contact with others. This includes people in your home: stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom if possible. Avoid older adults and people with compromised immune systems. Do not go to public places – arrange for groceries and supplies to be dropped off at your door to minimize contact. If you must leave your home, wear a mask and maintain a distance at least 2 metres from others.

Social Distancing:

EVERYONE, symptomatic or not, should avoid close physical contact with others as much as possible to help minimize viral spread.

Self-monitoring:

If you have been exposed to the virus, in addition to physical distancing, you should track how you are feeling and make note of any new symptoms. You can complete the COVID self-assessment tool at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

What should I do if I feel unwell or am worried about my baby during self-isolation?

For non-urgent concerns, contact your healthcare provider, the public health unit or the BCHS COVID-19 hotline. **For urgent concerns, call the Birthing Unit at 519-751-5521.**

Resources:

Brantford Local Resources

Brant County Health Unit: 519-753-4937

Email: covid19@bchu.org

<https://www.bchu.org/ServicesWeProvide/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Brant Community Healthcare System

<https://www.bchsys.org/en/covid-19.aspx>

BCHS COVID-19 Hotline: 519-751-5818

COVID-19 Assessment Centre (call BCBS COVID Hotline to determine need for assessment)

Government Resources

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000 or TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Ministry of Health Self-Assessment Tool:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

Federal COVID-19 Hotline: 1-833-784-4397 E-mail: phac.info.aspc@canada.ca

Government of Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

Government of Ontario <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

Other resources

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-pregnancy-childbirth-and-breastfeeding>

<https://soqc.org/en/-/COVID-19/en/content/COVID-19/COVID-19.aspx?hkey=4e808c0d-555f-4714-8a4a-348b547dc268>

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/2020-03-28-covid19-pregnancy-guidance.pdf>

<https://capwhn.ca/covid-19-perinatal-care/>

<https://www.smfm.org/covid19>

https://www.obgyn.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/toronto_region_covid_19_management_of_pregnant_women_and_neonates_with_suspected_or_confirmed_covid_march_17_2020.pdf

Please remember information may change as COVID-19 continues to evolve on a daily basis.



Brant Community
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM