

Glenmore Maternity COVID-19 Update

During this pandemic our principal goal is keeping you and your newborn baby safe and limit any unnecessary potential exposure to the Novel Coronavirus.

Clinic Safety:

First and foremost, Glenmore Maternity has taken a number of steps to provide the safest access to our clinic.

1. Our cleaning procedures have always been thorough with medical grade sanitization and sterilization of all rooms between patients. We are being even more conscious of this at this time and ensuring all surfaces and devices are cleaned between patients.
2. We have prioritized appointments for prenatal and postpartum patients to times of the day when the clinic is least busy. This way, we are able to take you directly to a room and minimize any waiting with others.
3. Our staff are screening all patients for symptoms of COVID-19. Patient's whose primary concern is related to symptoms of COVID-19 are not seen in clinic per our provincial health guidelines and are directed to call 811 or attend the ER if their symptoms are severe.
4. We are asking that partners and children do not enter the exam rooms at this time as it makes social distancing more challenging. There may be exceptions to this where necessary.

Potential Telehealth Visit:

The most important aspect of this is balancing times where you need to be seen face to face in the clinic to check baby's heartrate, baby's growth, your weight and blood pressure and those where we may be able to perform a visit over the phone. Below are times where, depending on your current situation, we may be able to coordinate a telephone visit. It is important to note that these will vary depending on your pregnancy baby's wellbeing and are at the discretion of your medical team.

- First prenatal visit: intake with Jerrai Dais RN over the phone, followed by an in person visit with your doctor
- 16 weeks
- 30 weeks
- 34 weeks
- 37 weeks

Hospital Safety:

Currently the procedure at all hospitals in Alberta are that one support person is allowed for labouring patients. This person cannot swap out with anyone else at anytime during labour. Hospitals are limiting all patients to one visitor in order to minimize the risk of transmission within the hospital so there are significantly fewer people at the hospitals at this time.

Everyone, including hospital staff and physicians have to undergo Coronavirus screening prior to entering the hospital. This includes a short questionnaire and a temperature. If you screen positive you will be asked to put on a mask prior to entering the hospital.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can pregnant women protect themselves from getting COVID-19?

The Novel Coronavirus is spread by droplets of the virus that come from an infected person's sneeze, cough, or secretions and find their way into a non-infected person's nose, mouth, or eyes through the air or by touching your face. You can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by taking these actions:

- Stay home and [socially distance](#). Now is the time to stay home and avoid social gatherings and other outings that are not essential. If you are near people outside of those you live with, we recommend maintaining two meters of distance between yourselves.
- [Wash your hands often and well](#).
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- [Clean and disinfect surfaces](#) that are frequently touched
- When sick, cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or the crook of your arm, then wash your hands.

For more information about general safety for you and your growing family please visit healthyparentshealthychildren.ca.

Is it safe to have my blood work or ultrasound done?

Yes, it is. We are being very conscious of only order tests when they need to be done in order to minimize your risk of potential exposure. At both locations, the lab and radiology clinics, the volume of patients has significantly decreased to ensure both staff and patients are at a lower risk of being exposed. We will always have a discussion with you to review the risks and benefits of these tests and potential alternatives, if they are available.

Please note that Alberta Precision Labs (previous Calgary Lab Services), has closed a number of their locations during the outbreak and this may continue to change. We recommend going to the Alberta Precision Labs website and booking an appointment and checking back prior to your appointment to ensure there have not been any changes.

I am almost term and worried me or my partner might become ill with COVID-19

If you are over 37-38 weeks we are recommending parents consider coming up with a plan to further limit your likelihood of coming in contact with someone who has COVID-19. While formal [self-isolation](#) is not necessary, you may want to consider decreasing the amount of time you are leaving your home, that you and your partner both work from home, you choose one person to do the grocery shopping and do this as infrequently as possible and less busy times of the day.

These are general recommendations, we are suggesting our patients become more conscious of these measures later in the third trimester to keep yourselves as healthy as possible for labour and taking care of yourself and your baby.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19

From what we know of the cases of COVID-19 internationally, pregnant women and newborns are not at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 or developing more severe illness. 80% of people develop MILD symptoms, we anticipate this is the case for our pregnant population as well.

If you believe you have the [symptoms of COVID-19](#) we ask that you please call 811 or go to the online [self assessment tool](#). Please also inform us via phone call at Glenmore Maternity. We will give provide you with support over the phone and discuss the safest way for you to be seen for your prenatal visits or postpartum and newborn visits.

If you are having severe symptoms like difficulty breathing, please proceed to the nearest emergency department for assessment.

What is the risk of COVID-19 being passed on to baby?

At this time, expert opinion is that a pregnant woman infected with COVID-19 will not pass on the virus to her growing fetus during pregnancy. The research is evolving rapidly in this area however, and much is still unknown

It is possible that a newborn can contract the virus from an infected mother or household contacts; proper infection control precautions help decrease this risk.

What are the risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy?

At this time there is no research that shows that COVID-19 can cause congenital anomalies. Based on data from China, it is possible that maternal infection may increase the risk of preterm rupture of membranes and preterm birth. Some research suggests maternal infection may increase the risk of growth problems in the fetus, so if you do acquire COVID-19 in pregnancy, we will order extra ultrasounds when you are recovered to check the baby's growth.

Can I still have a support person?

We know that having an excellent support person in labour is extremely important for all expectant moms. During this outbreak we are ensuring you still have the support you need in the safest way possible. You are able to have one support person with you during your labour. They are not able to "swap" out with anyone else and will have to [undergo screening](#) upon entering the hospital which includes a short questionnaire of symptoms and a temperature check.

In the very unlikely circumstance that your support person happens to screen positive or has fallen ill we recommend you have a backup person on call to ensure you have the support you need.

What will my labour be like during the pandemic?

If you do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 and are not on [self-isolation](#), labour and delivery will be very similar aside from increased screening measures when you get to the hospital.

If you are on [self-isolation](#), experiencing symptoms or have tested positive for coronavirus your labour will be slightly different in that we will be monitoring both you and baby's wellbeing more closely. Your team at the hospital including your doctor and your support person will wear protective equipment that includes a gown, mask with eye protection, and gloves.

What will happen when I am discharged from the hospital?

We are working to balance ensuring you and your baby are safe to be discharged from hospital and minimize the time you have to be in the hospital. We will discharge you as close to 24 hours once your baby has had their "heel poke" or newborn metabolic screen completed. A public health nurse will contact you to check on you and discuss the need for further follow up.

During this time, we would like you to schedule a phone visit once baby is 3-5 days old at Glenmore Maternity and we will plan to see you in the clinic at 5-7 days postpartum to support you both and ensure baby is gaining weight well.

If I am experiencing symptoms, have been tested positive for COVID-19, or need to self-isolate, can I still have [skin-to-skin](#) with my baby after delivery?

Yes! This is so important for the wellbeing of both you and baby. We will show you how to wash your hands and chest and wear a mask to protect your baby. You can continue this practice to keep your baby safe until you are feeling better. Feeling better means that all of your symptoms have resolved or 10 days has passed since the start of symptoms, whichever is longer.

If I have active COVID-19 at the time of delivery can I still breastfeed?

YES! It is reassuring that in six Chinese cases tested, breastmilk was negative for COVID-19; however, given the small number of cases, this evidence should be interpreted with caution. The main risk for infants of breastfeeding is the close contact with the mother. With the current information we have we believe that the [benefits of breastfeeding](#) outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breastmilk.

The most important consideration is the close proximity of parents to baby while feeding, whether breast or bottle. We recommend taking the following precautions to limit the spread of infection to baby:

- Hand washing before touching baby, breast pump or bottles
- Try and avoid coughing or sneezing on your baby while feeding at the breast
- Wear a face mask while breastfeeding if you have symptoms
- Consider asking someone who is well to feed expressed milk to baby

For women bottle feeding with formula or expressed milk it is even more important to ensure you are properly sterilizing bottles and nipples.

We are recommending that when you are not providing direct care to your baby they should be at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from anyone who is sick, may have COVID-19, or who has a respiratory illness.

Where can I find the most up to date, trusted information regarding COVID-19? Visit ahs.ca/covid or alberta.ca/covid for trusted, Alberta-specific information about COVID-19. A podcast featuring Dr. Colin Birch, Department Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology for Calgary Zone, with questions about the impact of COVID-19 on expectant mothers and families of newborns is available at ahs.ca/covidpodcast

Where can I find more information about pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, postpartum supports, and caring for my new baby?

Contact your local community or public health centre for information on prenatal classes or take the [online Birth and Babies course](#).

If you are pregnant or caring for a newborn, take care of yourself. Take breaks from watching or listening to pandemic information. Connect virtually with others in similar situations and talk about how you are feeling. Know that you are not alone. Find supports at: ahs.ca/HelpInToughTimes