**CORONOVIRUS**

It is expected that the majority of women who are exposed to the Coronavirus will experience only mild or moderate flu like symptoms.

New evidence suggests that individuals of black and minority ethnic (BAME) background may be at higher risk of developing complications of coronavirus.  This may apply to pregnant women.  We therefore advise pregnant women of BAME background to seek help early if they are concerned they may have symptoms of coronavirus.  Please discuss with your midwife if you have any concerns.

**Important information for women and their birth partners when attending our Maternity Unit**

This update informs you of what you need to do to keep yourself safe, and protect other patients and our staff from Coronavirus.

If you or anyone in your household develops symptoms that might be related to coronavirus, **please do not come into hospital unannounced.**  Please contact NHS 111 or your GP who will advise you further.

**Travelling from home**

There are some important steps that you and your birth partner can take to protect yourself and others from the spread of coronavirus when travelling to and from your appointment and during your time in our hospitals:

* Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport. Use a sanitizer gel if soap and water are not available.
* Maintain two meters distance from people who are not part of your household.
* Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch a cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a sanitizer gel.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

We thank you in advance for helping yourself, our patients and our staff to stay safe. If you have any questions please contact us using the telephone number on your appointment letter.

**At our hospital**

To maintain the safety of our patients and staff it is very important that the number of people on our hospital sites and in our departments at any one time is very low.

Social distancing must be maintained by patients, visitors, and staff at all times. Sometimes this is difficult to achieve. There are some actions you can take to help.

* Please keep to the left when walking along our corridors
* Please walk in single file if you are able
* Please comply with social distancing signs and floor markings
* Please follow one way routes when directed to do so by staff

**Face coverings**

**Birth partners and anyone attending the hospital site must wear a face covering.**

Face coverings do not replace the need to follow social distancing rules but may prevent you passing on coronavirus before you have symptoms.

If you have your own face covering, you must wear this to your appointment. On your arrival, clinical staff may ask you to wear a surgical face mask whilst you are with us. Thank you for your cooperation with this.

A cloth face covering should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head. When wearing a face covering, take care to tuck away any loose ends.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting it on and after taking it off. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth at all times and store used face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them.

Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with your mouth and nose. Once removed, make sure you clean any surfaces the face covering has touched.

You should wash a face covering regularly. It can go in with other laundry, using your normal detergent. Information on how to make your own face covering may be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering)

**Attending for antenatal and scan appointments**

We are pleased to announce that following lateral flow testing, partners are now able to attend all scans although due to the layout of our waiting area, partners will be required to wait outside of the department, but will be able to accompany you once you are in the scanning room. This is to ensure we are following social distancing measures. Partners must wear face coverings whilst in our hospitals. If you or your partner is exempt from wearing a face mask please discuss with our staff.

We kindly ask you do not arrive early for your appointment.  Try to attend no more than 5 minutes before your expected appointment. If you arrive earlier than this you may be asked to return nearer to your appointment time.  If you arrive late your appointment may need to be rebooked for another date.  This is to stop too many people being in the department at one time and help minimise risk.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for further information about the lateral flow testing

**Attending for urgent care**

Partners can also attend the Antenatal Day Unit as long as they have undertaken lateral flow testing- see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3

Partners will be able to attend Maternity Triage in a supportive role from the 6.4.21 –see Appendix 4

**Visiting on the Antenatal and Postnatal Wards**

We have continued to review our visiting policy following revised guidance received from NHS England.

We are pleased to announce our antenatal and postnatal wards are now operating restricted visiting for your nominated support partner.

**Your support partner must not be symptomatic of Coronavirus, must not be in a period of self-isolation or have tested positive for Coronavirus in the last 10 days.**

Your support partner must wear a face covering whilst in the hospital and follow strict social distancing and hand hygiene whilst on the ward. It is important your support partner follows social distancing measures between hospital visits and minimise contact with people outside of your household.

To ensure the safety of you, your family and our staff, any support partner not complying with this guidance will be asked to leave.

Twice weekly lateral flow testing for all support partners will commence from the 6.4.21-please refer to Appendix 4 for more details

**Visiting for birth partners on Delivery Suite**

In labour, when you are ready to come to hospital, please call in advance. The midwife will ask you about your labour and some additional questions about your wellbeing and that of your family.

We will do everything we can to respect your birth choices.

**Your birth** **partner/s needs to be free from Coronavirus symptoms and has not had a positive Coronavirus test result in the last 10 days**.

Your birth partner will stay with you throughout your labour and delivery unless on the rare occasion you need to have a general anaesthetic.

To ensure the safety of all our pregnant women, birth partners and staff it is important your birth partner wears a face covering and remains in your delivery room throughout your stay.

Twice weekly lateral flow testing for all support partners will commence from the 6.4.21-please refer to Appendix 4 for more details

**Visiting your baby on the Neonatal Unit**

All visitors with babies on the NNU will need to undertake twice weekly lateral flow testing –see Appendix 5 for more information.