



COVID-19 Alert level 2

Information for pregnant women and whānau: updated 20 May 2020

This information is subject to change according to Ministry of Health updates.

Midwifery care for women in self-isolation/quarantine:

- Cold or flu-like symptoms (suspected case)
- Direct contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Confirmed COVID-19

This information is for women and their families who are in self-isolation/quarantine for COVID-19 exposure risk factors, or suspected or confirmed COVID-19. General information for women and whānau at alert level 2 can be found [here](#).

Why would I be asked to self-isolate/quarantine?

You may be advised to self-isolate/quarantine because:

- You have been in close contact with a confirmed or probably case of COVID-19
- You are awaiting COVID-19 test results
- You have symptoms of COVID-19: cough; sore throat; shortness of breath; head cold symptoms e.g. runny nose, sneezing, post-nasal drip; loss of sense of smell; fever
- You have tested positive for COVID-19 and you've been advised to recover at home

What should I do if I'm asked to self-isolate/quarantine?

You need to follow the instructions from the public health unit, Healthline or your GP about self-isolation/quarantine. Read the [information about self-isolation on the Ministry of Health website](#).

Can I still have in-person antenatal appointments if I am in self-isolation/ quarantine?

You should contact your midwife or antenatal clinic to inform them that you are currently in self-isolation/quarantine and request advice on your antenatal care.

Routine antenatal appointments will be delayed until self-isolation/quarantine ends. If your midwife or doctor advises that your appointment cannot wait, the necessary arrangements will be made for you to be seen. You will need to have your care provided in your home or a hospital setting. Do not attend clinic appointments while you are in self-isolation/quarantine.

What do I do if I feel unwell or I'm worried about my baby during self-isolation/quarantine?

Pregnant women are advised not to attend maternity units or the emergency department unless in need of urgent pregnancy or medical care.



If you have concerns about the wellbeing of yourself or your baby during your self-isolation/quarantine period, contact your midwife or your midwifery team. They will provide further advice, including whether you need to attend hospital.

If attendance at the maternity hospital is advised, pregnant women are requested to travel by private transport, and alert the maternity reception once on the premises, prior to entering the hospital.

Will being in self-isolation/quarantine for potential exposure to COVID-19 or suspected or confirmed COVID-19 affect where I give birth?

In most cases you will be advised to birth in a maternity hospital. Primary maternity facilities are not equipped for the birth care of women who have had potential exposure to COVID-19. In some cases, home birth may be an option if you do not have any symptoms of COVID-19. It is important to discuss your preferences with your midwife and make a plan together.

If I have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will this affect how I give birth?

There is currently no evidence to suggest you cannot give birth normally or that you would be safer having a caesarean birth if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, so your birth plan should be followed as closely as possible based on your wishes. It may be recommended that a monitor is used to track baby's heartrate and the contraction pattern during labour, in order to identify any signs of distress in baby.

However, some women may be recommended to have a caesarean birth if their respiratory condition (breathing) suggests that urgent birth is needed.

It is not recommended that you give birth in a birthing pool in hospital if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, as the virus can sometimes be found in faeces (poo/tutae). It may also be more difficult for healthcare staff to use adequate personal protective equipment during a water birth.

Can I still consider using Entonox (nitrous oxide gas and air) during labour to help me with managing the pain of labour?

You can use Entonox if you choose to and it is available.

Can I still use an epidural or a spinal block if I need one to help manage the pain of labour?

Yes, an epidural or spinal block will be available as usual if you give birth in a maternity hospital.

What happens if I go into labour during my self-isolation/quarantine period?

If you go into labour, you should call your midwife for advice, and inform her (if you haven't done so previously) that you are in self-isolation/quarantine and what the reason for self-isolation/



quarantine is (ie. close contact with a COVID-19 case, or suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection).

Your maternity carers have been advised on ways to ensure that you and your baby receive safe, quality care, respecting your birth plan as closely as possible.

- Call your community midwife before travelling to the maternity hospital
- You will be advised to attend hospital via private transport where possible
- You will be met at the maternity unit entrance and provided with a surgical face mask, which will need to stay on until you are isolated in a suitable room
- If an ambulance is required, inform the 111 call taker of your COVID-19 status

Could I pass COVID-19 to my baby?

As this is a new virus, there is limited evidence about managing COVID-19 infection in women who have just given birth. It is understood to be highly unlikely that a mother would pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy. There has been a very small number of newborn babies tested positive for COVID-19 after birth.

Will my baby be tested for COVID-19?

Yes, if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 at the time your baby is born, your baby will be tested for COVID-19.

Will I be able to stay with my baby and have skin-to-skin if I have suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

Yes, if that is your choice. Provided your baby is well and doesn't require care in the neonatal unit, you will be kept together after you have given birth.

A discussion about the risks and benefits should take place between you and your family and the doctors caring for your baby (neonatologists) to individualise care for your baby.

Can I breastfeed my baby if I have suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

Yes, breastfeeding is recommended. You will be advised to take some precautions including washing your hands thoroughly before holding your baby and wearing a mask while breastfeeding your baby. Please see our [frequently asked questions document about infant feeding and COVID-19](#) for more information.

Will I be able to have visitors following the birth if I stay in hospital?

Many hospitals are limiting visitors to the hospital to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Check with your midwife and your local maternity facility to find out their recommendations.