

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Communications for Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) to share**

Calderdale & Huddersfield MVP, North Kirklees MVP and Wakefield MVP are in close contact with our local Maternity Services, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) and Local Authorities for updates and advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19). We want to ensure that pregnant women get the most up to date advice and feel reassured about their care.

The advice provided in this note is based on latest guidance from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist (RCOG) which is updated frequently as evidence and data changes.

### **Advice for pregnant women**

As a pregnant woman the news that you were placed in a 'vulnerable group' by the Chief Medical Officer on Monday 16 March 2020 may have caused you concern.

We would like to reiterate that the evidence we have so far is that pregnant women are still no more likely to contract the infection than the general population. What we do know is that pregnancy, in a small proportion of women, can alter how your body handles severe viral infections. This is something that midwives and obstetricians have known for many years and are used to dealing with. What has driven the decisions made by officials is the need to restrict spread of illness because if the number of infections were to rise sharply, the number of severely infected women could rise and this could put the lives of pregnant women in the third trimester in danger.

Our general advice is that:

- If you are infected with COVID-19 you are still most likely to have no symptoms or a mild illness from which you will make a full recovery.
- If you develop more severe symptoms or your recovery is delayed, this may be a sign that you are developing a more significant chest infection that requires enhanced care. Our advice remains that if you feel your symptoms are worsening or if you are not getting better you should contact your maternity care team, NHS 111 or local alternative straight away for further information and advice.

### **2.2 Advice regarding social distancing and self-isolation**

The UK Chief Medical Officer has decided that, given the limited information currently available about how COVID-19 could affect pregnancy, it would be prudent for pregnant women to increase their social distancing to reduce the risk of infection

All pregnant women, regardless of gestation, should observe the social distancing guidance available on the Government website <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> The key messages for everyone are:

- Stay at home. You should only leave the house for very limited purposes:
  - shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
  - one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household
  - any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person

- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home
- stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Further information specific to pregnant women should also be viewed and is available:

1) For all vulnerable people including pregnant women

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

2) For individuals and households of individuals with symptoms of new continuous cough or fever

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Women above 28 weeks' gestation should be particularly attentive to social distancing and minimising contact with others.

Major new measures have been announced for people at highest risk from Coronavirus. This includes pregnant women with significant heart disease (congenital or acquired) advising them to stay at home for a period of at least 12 weeks. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-new-measures-to-protect-people-at-highest-risk-from-coronavirus>

### **2.3 Advice regarding your appointments or urgent visits to clinics and hospitals**

If you are well at the moment and have had no complications in your previous pregnancies, the following practical advice may be helpful:

- If you have a routine scan or visit due in the coming days, please contact your maternity unit for advice and to agree a plan. You may still need to attend for a visit but the appointment may change due to staffing requirements.
- If you are between appointments, please wait to hear from your maternity team.

If you are attending more regularly in pregnancy, then your maternity team will be in touch with plans for further appointments, as required.

Whatever your personal situation please consider the following:

- Maternity care is essential, and has been developed over many years with improving success to reduce complications in mothers and babies. The risks of not attending care include harm to you, your baby or both of you, even in the context of coronavirus. It is important that you continue to attend your scheduled routine care when you are well.
- If you have any concerns, you will be able to contact your maternity team as usual but please note they may take longer than usual to get back to you.
- If you have an urgent problem related to your pregnancy but not related to coronavirus, get in touch using the same emergency contact details you already have. Please do not contact this number unless you have an urgent problem.
- If you have symptoms of coronavirus, contact your maternity service and they will arrange the right place and time to come for your visits. You should not attend a routine clinic.
- You will be asked to keep the number of people with you to a minimum. This will include being asked to not bring children with you to maternity appointments.
- There may be a need to reduce the number of antenatal visits you have. This will be communicated with you, and will be done as safely as possible, taking into account available evidence on the safe number of visits required. Do not reduce your number of visits without agreeing first with your maternity team.

At this time, it is particularly important that you help your maternity team take care of you. If you have had an appointment cancelled or delayed, and are not sure of your next contact with your maternity team, please let them know by using the contact numbers provided to you at booking

**Local information:**

**Calderdale & Huddersfield Foundation Hospital Trust (CHFT)**

**Visiting restrictions:**

In line with national guidance and to keep Mums, babies and staff as safe as possible, with immediate effect CHFT are changing their appointment attendance criteria and visiting hours as follows:

ALL ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS including scans and community appointments, please attend alone, NO partners, relatives or children to accompany.

For LABOUR (Labour Ward and Birth Centres) ONE named birth partner may attend for the duration of labour and is allowed to stay for two hours after the birth. The birth partner will then be asked to leave.

For planned C sections the birth partner will be invited to attend 30 minutes before and allowed to stay for 2 hours after the operation time.

There will be no other visiting allowed and Mums are encouraged to keep in touch with family through phone / video calls. We will aim to discharge mothers and babies home as soon as possible.

Women are encouraged to access the Better Births at Calderdale and Huddersfield Facebook page for additional local information : <https://www.facebook.com/betterbirthsCHFT/> This page shares birth and pregnancy stories, as well as lots of health and well-being messages to support families with their pregnancy, birth and postnatal period.

Please note:

This page is not operated 24/7 - please do not message the page with concerns about yourself or your baby. Please contact Maternity Assessment Centre on 01422 224419 where the team of midwives are available at all times for your concerns.

This page is a positive page to show good news and happy stories - negative comments will be removed for the safety of our staff, however if you wish to discuss any concerns you may have we can direct you to the relevant person.

**Mid Yorkshire Hospital Trust (MYHT)**

**Booking appointment:**

From 23 March 2020 midwives are telephoning women to arrange a suitable date and time to call for an initial "booking" appointment which will be a telephone consultation and will give general pregnancy advice, answer initial questions and discuss things like screening and place of birth. The midwife will then arrange a full booking appointment (usually an hour) where they will obtain full

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history and discusses decisions around screening. Midwives are then arranging a short 10 – 15 minute face to face contact to do tests such as taking blood samples and BMI and blood pressure checks

**Visiting restrictions:**

Antenatal clinic and appointments - Women to attend appointments on their own

Ultrasound scans - Women to attend appointments on their own

Antenatal ward - Visitors not permitted on the Antenatal/Postnatal ward. Partners are unable to stay overnight.

Delivery/labour ward and birth centres - One birth partner only can accompany women during labour and immediate postnatal period and they must be without COVID-19 symptoms.

Postnatal & Transitional Care Wards- No visiting.