

Maternity department

Patient information leaflet:

Testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection for pregnant mothers and their support person

Introduction

We have made changes to our service to help respond to COVID-19 and protect you, your family, staff and visitors. We would like to reassure you that we have strict infection prevention measures in place and we are taking extra care in how we are looking after all women who come into our services. We have created separate areas and are following government guidance to care for those who have or are suspected to have COVID-19. This information leaflet has been produced to offer you information on the reasons why you and your support person are being offered a COVID-19 test. Please don't hesitate to raise any concerns you may have with the midwife.

If you are admitted to hospital you will be offered a COVID-19 test, which we strongly recommend accepting.

Why am I being offered a test for COVID-19?

You will be offered a COVID-19 test if you are being admitted to hospital for any reason. This is to ensure we are keeping you, your baby and our staff as safe as possible and to help contain and reduce the spread of the virus. Knowing whether or not you have COVID-19 may also reduce delays in care.

If you are having a planned procedure you and your birth support person should, where possible, self-isolate in the 14 days prior to this taking place.

Who is a support person and when will they be offered a test?

The support person may be the baby's father or co-parent, but it does not need to be. What is important is that the support person is someone chosen by you.

A support person will be offered a test if you are:

- Having a planned lower segment caesarean section
- Having a planned induction of labour
- Being admitted to delivery suite in labour
- Being admitted to maternity ward and your support person wishes to visit you during the current permitted visiting hours

The midwife will explain this process to you.

How and when is the test taken?

An initial screening test with the ability to produce results within 30 minutes will be done in most situations.

A second confirmatory test will be offered if we anticipate your stay with us will be for more than a few hours. These results are usually back within six to eight hours.

Swabs will be taken from the inside your nose and sometimes the back of your throat. This is not painful but may be uncomfortable.

If your initial test is negative and you are still with us after 72 hours we will offer you the test again. Your support partner will also be offered a test if they would like to visit you during the permitted visiting hours.

Can I choose not to have the test?

A midwife or obstetrician will explain why we are offering you the COVID-19 test and the procedure. However, the test cannot be done without your consent and you can decline the test if you wish.

If you choose not to take the test, your midwife/obstetrician will recommend a plan for your care based on other factors, such as whether you have symptoms of COVID-19 or not. We are required to treat women who choose not to have the test as if they have COVID-19. The government strongly advise accepting screening for COVID-19. If your support person refuses a test they will not be allowed to stay with you or visit you.

What happens if my test shows I have COVID-19?

If your test shows you have COVID-19 your midwife and an obstetrician will review your medical history, your pregnancy and whether you have symptoms of COVID-19 and discuss with you the most appropriate plan of care. Your details will also be shared with the NHS Test and Trace team who will be in contact with you separately for contact tracing purposes according to current government regulations.

What happens if I am tested positive and need admission to maternity ward?

If you are being admitted to the maternity ward, a separate room will be allocated to you and staff providing care for you will have to wear appropriate personal protective equipment and adhere to strict infection prevention policy to protect you and the staff.

What happens if I am tested positive and I am in established labour?

You should be aware that we will need to put in extra provisions such as personnel who provide care for you in labour wear the appropriate personal protective equipment and adhere to strict social distancing rules. Our staff have been trained to still provide you the best care possible while adhering to the strict infection prevention policies.

Can I still have a water birth?

If you have chosen to birth in water, this may not be possible as there is a small risk of transmission of the virus in water and it might infect our staff who clean the equipment after a water birth. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives have sought advice from the UK Infection Prevention and Control Cell about this issue. They recommend that women should not birth in water within 10 days of a positive test or if they are still symptomatic of COVID-19. If you require further information or wish to discuss this in further detail please ask your midwife.

What happens if my support person tests positive?

If you are admitted to the labour or maternity ward unfortunately your support person would need to return home and isolate for 10 days as per government guidelines.

If this occurs during labour you will be able to choose another support person from a bubble that is **not** from your household who may be able to attend. This person will also be offered a test before accompanying you.

How will a positive test affect my post-natal care?

You and your baby will receive the same care as if you were negative. You will either be in a separate room or you might be placed in a bay with other women who have tested positive. We aim to reduce the time women spend in hospital after birth. You will be reviewed by an obstetrician to assess if you need any additional medication or care. You may be prescribed medication to prevent blood clots as COVID-19 infection has been found to increase your risks of developing blood clots.

Can my support person accompany me to my scans?

We have now introduced the ability to screen a support person when women are attending for their dating scan (between 11 and 13 weeks) and anomaly scan (between 19 and 21 weeks). You will be contacted prior to the appointment for the ultrasound scan to explain the process for having this done.

References:

1. <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>
2. [NHS England Lateral flow antigen test for pregnant women and support people Frequently asked questions 24 December 2020](#)

How to provide feedback

Our aim is to provide a quality of care we would want for ourselves, our families and friends. If there was anything that we could have done please let us know via the department/ward staff or the patient experience team available on 01432 372986 or email PALs@wvt.nhs.uk (opening times may vary).

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, Audio tape or other languages upon request. Please contact patient experience team on the above telephone number.

You may be asked to give your opinion on the service you have received. We welcome your feedback as this will help us to improve the care and treatment we provide to our patients.

Wye Valley NHS Trust www.wyevalley.nhs.uk

Telephone 01432 355444