



COVID-19 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS GUIDE:

PREGNANT MOTHERS

Version 2, 4/20/20

Congratulations on your pregnancy! Pregnancy can be both joyful and stressful, but being pregnant during the coronavirus pandemic may be increasing the normal anxiety that accompanies pregnancy. Since March 2020, there have been many changes in our daily lives and in the healthcare system to protect us from this virus, including new policies and closure of many places in the community. These changes may be especially challenging if you are expecting. You may feel lonely since you are not with your family and friends who want to be together and celebrate your pregnancy. It is important to remember we can still connect socially while maintaining a healthy physical distance. Like many others, you may also have questions such as how it could affect your health, the health of your baby, and your birth plan. Scientists are continually working to understand the pandemic and studying how the virus may impact pregnant mothers and unborn babies. There is still much for researchers to learn, and we may have to accept that we may not have all the answers we desire for many months. Until then, here are some tips to help you take the best care possible of yourself and your baby while you are pregnant this time. Helpful resources are also included.

Keep You and Your Unborn Baby Healthy

- Ask your obstetrician or midwife for tips on keeping your family and unborn baby safe and healthy
- Protect your family from COVID-19 as much as possible
 - Make sure that all those living with you (especially children) have good hygiene
 - Wash hands thoroughly several times a day, especially when coming in from the outside
 - Use sanitizing wipes or gels when you do not have soap and water
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often (such as cell phones).
- Be thankful when others in your home have good hygiene
- Allow healthy partners, friends, or family to run errands for you so that you are decreasing the amount of time that you are in public areas



- Wear a mask to protect yourself and others when leaving home
- Check all members of your household daily for symptoms and call your healthcare providers if any members have coronavirus symptoms such as fever, dry cough, red eyes, diarrhea, fatigue, or loss of smell
- Self-check daily for symptoms, and get in touch with your healthcare provider as soon as possible if you begin to feel ill
- Do not forget the pregnancy basics
 - Stay hydrated (your urine should be light in color)
 - Take your prenatal vitamin and medications prescribed by your doctor or midwife
 - Get enough rest
 - Exercise safely (at least six feet from the next person)
 - Remember that the baby is safer inside your womb than anywhere else right now

Accept that Your Pregnancy will Differ from Ones that Occurred Before the Pandemic

- Stay in touch with your obstetrician or midwife since there will likely be fewer in-person appointments, and be sure to:
 - Attend appointments as directed and take recommended steps to minimize exposure risk for in-person appointments
 - Ask about virtual appointments for visits that do not include labs, ultrasounds, or physical exams
 - Ask about a patient portal to ease contact with your providers
- Ask for copies of your health records so that you have your prenatal care record
 - Be prepared to change hospitals if the one you like runs out of beds
- Know that hospital visitation rules are changing – today’s rules may be different from future rules
 - Do not promise anyone that they may accompany you
 - Make them aware that plans may change at any time
 - Prepare yourself for being relatively alone or with only the baby’s father during and after the delivery
- Continue your birthing education by attending online birthing, breastfeeding, and baby care classes
- Do not plan to have an in-person baby shower and cancel any that have been scheduled
 - Encourage friends to throw a virtual baby shower instead



Attend to Your Own Mental Wellness

- Remind yourself that you do not need to be superwoman right now
 - Cut down your to-do list
 - Drop some of less pressing chores, or, better yet – ask others to take over some of your tasks
- Be aware of your own emotions by taking your “emotional temperature” once or twice every day when you check your physical temperature for COVID-19 related fever
 - Imagine a thermometer from 0 to 100 degrees, with 100 degrees being the most overwhelmed you have ever felt
 - Determine a temperature for yourself that indicates that you are too stressed out and need more help
- Take time to reflect on things you are grateful for (like the miracle growing inside you!) - gratitude is scientifically proven to increase physical and emotional well-being
- Limit the time you spend learning COVID-19-related news, and make sure that you also learn news topics other than COVID-19 during your down time
- Do activities that bring you feelings of peace, calm, and enjoyment
- Know when to seek professional support and reach out for help if you:
 - Feel sad or empty most days for at least two weeks
 - Blame yourself constantly for things outside of your control
 - Have a lot of trouble falling or staying asleep
 - Are not eating or eating too much
 - Have thoughts that you may find scary or upsetting, like about dying
 - Are feeling the urge to drink or use substances

Build Your Support Network

- Reach out to family and friends
- Stay in touch using Zoom, Facetime, Skype, and other virtual platforms for connecting
- Use online communities (e.g., [Babycenter](#), [Mumsnet](#), [Pregistry](#), [Whattoexpect](#)) to get advice and connect with other pregnant mothers who can relate to what you are going through

Prepare for the Baby’s Arrival

- Read! Read! Read! You can read up on what you need to know about pregnancy and baby’s first year of life



- Check your local library's online offerings
- Order hard copies or e-books
- Find mommy blogs
- Get creative with preparing baby's nursery space
- Set up your baby registry if you plan to use one
- Reach out to friends and family members with babies to borrow gently used baby and maternity clothes and gear
- Be your own financial planner
 - Have a budget for the baby's first year of life and beyond
 - Think about bringing your partner or other close family members into this planning
- Study and plan childcare options, especially if you live in a high cost area

Helpful Resources

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention's "Pregnancy and Breastfeeding FAQs" <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>
- Harvard Health Blog's "Pregnant and worried about the new coronavirus?" article <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/pregnant-and-worried-about-the-new-coronavirus-2020031619212>
- World Health Organization's "Q&A on COVID-19, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding" <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-pregnancy-childbirth-and-breastfeeding>
- Baby Center's "Coronavirus (COVID-19) pregnancy FAQs: Medical experts answer your questions" https://www.babycenter.com/0_coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-faqs-medical-experts-answer-y_40007006.bc#articlesection12
- What to Expect's comprehensive list of the "Best online birthing, Lamaze, and lactation classes for pregnant women during the coronavirus outbreak" <https://www.whattoexpect.com/news/pregnancy/online-birthing-lamaze-lactation-classes-coronavirus/>
- Baby List's guide for "How to throw a virtual baby shower" <https://www.babylist.com/hello-baby/virtual-baby-shower>
- First-year Baby Costs Calculator
- <https://www.babycenter.com/baby-cost-calculator>
- The Ultimate First Year Baby Budget
- <https://wealthkeel.com/blog/first-year-baby-budget>