

# LABOR AND DELIVERY VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR LABORING PATIENTS DURING COVID-19

As part of our screening process for admission to labor and delivery, all patients will undergo COVID-19 nasopharyngeal PCR testing regardless of symptoms. During this period, patients will be allowed one (1) designated support person to stay with them until testing is finalized. All support persons must:

- Undergo screening for exposure or symptoms of COVID-19 at point of entry  
If at any time the support person begins to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, they will be asked to seek medical care, if needed and will be required to leave the hospital and isolate in their home.
- Wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose for the duration of their stay
- Sanitize hands when entering or leaving patient's room

## GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 NEGATIVE PATIENTS

### Labor and Delivery

Patients who are confirmed as COVID-19 negative will be allowed one (1) designated support person to stay with them during labor and delivery. The support person will be required to:

- Undergo screening for exposure or symptoms of COVID-19 at point of entry
- Wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose for the duration of their stay
- Sanitize hands when entering or leaving patient's room

### Mother Baby Unit

COVID-19 negative mothers may have one support person. Support persons must be screened for COVID-19 upon entering the facility and daily. Support persons must also wear a mask or face covering at all times while in the hospital.

## GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 POSITIVE PATIENTS

### Labor and Delivery

Patients who are confirmed to have COVID-19 are considered infectious and will be allowed one (1) designated support person to stay with them during labor and delivery. The support person will be required to:

- Undergo screening for exposure or symptoms of COVID-19 at point of entry to the hospital.  
If at any time the support person begins to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, they will be asked to seek medical care, if needed and will be required to leave the hospital and isolate in their home.
- Wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose at all times
- Maintain proper hand hygiene
- Maintain at least 6-foot distance from staff as much as possible.
- Remain restricted to the patient's room. If the support person chooses to leave the room, they will not be allowed re-entry.
- Will be required to leave after delivery

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## Mother Baby Unit

COVID-19 positive mother may not have a support person during the post-partum period. Baby will be able to room in with mother to assist with successful bonding and breastfeeding. Our staff will educate mother on how to protect her baby from transmitting COVID-19 during this period. We offer a variety of virtual visit options. It is important that the support person remain healthy and COVID-19 free in order to assist with care when mother and baby return home.

## CESAREAN DELIVERY IN ALL PATIENTS

Should a patient require Cesarean delivery, the one (1) designated support person is required to:

- Wait in the patient's room until brought to the operating room by staff.
- Remove personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to entering the operating room and don appropriate PPE for the operating room as directed by staff.
- Follow direction of Anesthesia/Obstetrics/Nursing staff at all times.
- Maintain social distancing standard of 6 feet from staff as much as possible.
- Patients who are COVID-19 positive and require cesarean delivery may not have a support person in the operating room.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE CARE

We are committed to providing the safest care possible during this unprecedented time. We continually review evidence regarding COVID-19 and pregnancy. Thank you for entrusting us with your care.

# WOMEN'S FAQ: COVID-19 EDITION

## **WILL I BE SEPARATED FROM MY BABY AFTER BIRTH?**

The only time a mother and baby would be separated is when the mother is too ill to care for the baby or has the flu. In these situations, the plan is discussed with mom, so she is part of the process. We allow mothers to make a fully informed choice about separation after discussing it with their provider.

## **CAN MY SUPPORT PERSON VISIT?**

Per the governor's mandate, maternity patients can have one support person. This person is selected by the patient and is allowed to stay with the patient. Support persons must wear a mask or face covering at all times while inside the hospital.

## **WILL MY SUPPORT PERSON NEED TO BRING CLOTHES, TOILETRIES, AND SNACKS?**

We recommend that your support person bring extra clothes, personal care items, phone chargers, and snacks with them to the hospital. Our goal is to keep you and your baby safe by limiting trips outside of the hospital during your stay.

## **IS THERE ROOM SERVICE DINING FOR SUPPORT PERSONS/GUESTS?**

Yes. Guest room service dining can be ordered from the patient's room between 6:30 am and 7:30 pm, and guests may choose from a variety of breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. The cost is \$8 for breakfast and \$10 for lunch or dinner.

## **CAN MY SUPPORT PERSON GO TO THE CAFETERIA OR HAVE FOOD DELIVERED FROM A RESTAURANT?**

Yes. The cafeteria and many restaurants are now open following the rules set out by the governor. Your support person may choose to have a guest tray delivered to the room when the patient orders room service, visit our cafeteria to purchase food, or arrange for restaurant curbside delivery to our first-floor entrance. All visitors are required to wear a mask or face covering at all times.

## **ARE THERE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SLEEPING AND SHOWERING IN THE PATIENT ROOMS?**

All rooms have sleeping accommodations for your support person, and all adult patient rooms have a shower. Showers are not available in the NICU, but accommodations for showers can be arranged.

## **HOW DO YOU HELP FAMILY MEMBERS AND LOVED ONES COMMUNICATE WITH PATIENTS DURING THIS TIME OF LIMITED VISITORS?**

Providers are using remote telehealth technology and the telephone to communicate with patients and patient's families. We will work with our patients and their families to use video chats and phone calls to help patients and their loved ones stay in touch during this pandemic.

### **WHAT IS THE VISITATION PROCESS FOR THE NICU?**

Mothers or the primary caregiver may stay in the room with the baby 24 hours a day. A second support person may visit between the hours of 8 am and 10 pm.

### **WHAT STEPS ARE THE STAFF TAKING TO PROTECT PATIENTS, VISITORS, AND EMPLOYEES?**

At the UAB Women & Infants Center, we recognize that universal masking, strict adherence to hand hygiene, and physical distancing are the keys to preventing transmission, and we continue to focus our efforts on these measures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone entering the facility wear a mask or face covering that covers their nose and mouth while visiting medical facilities. All UAB Medicine health care and non-medical personnel are following universal masking guidelines, in addition to wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Hand sanitizer dispensers are available at all nursing stations, entry points, and elsewhere throughout the hospital, and the number of visitors is limited and enforced for the safety of all patients, their families, and staff.

### **ARE MASKS PROVIDED TO VISITORS?**

As part of UAB Medicine's universal masking policy, visitors are asked to arrive at our facilities with a clean mask or face covering. If they do not arrive with a mask, one will be provided as long as supplies are available. Visitors are required to wear masks at all times inside the hospital, except when eating or drinking.

### **HOW IS COVID-19 TESTING BEING MANAGED AT THE WOMEN & INFANTS CENTER?**

All patients are tested for COVID-19 before being admitted to UAB Hospital, including the Women & Infants Center.

### **ARE THERE ANY CLINICAL CHANGES IN LABOR AND DELIVERY CARE DURING THE PANDEMIC?**

All patients are tested for COVID-19. For patients who test negative, there is no change in the clinical care you receive. For patients who test positive, we follow American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for you and your baby's care. Patients and their support persons are incorporated into this planning. We allow mothers to make a fully informed choice about separation their care after discussion with their baby's provider.

### **WHEN WILL THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE REOPEN? ARE THERE OTHER INEXPENSIVE LODGING OPTIONS FOR PARENTS FROM OUT OF TOWN?**

RMHC Global, which provides the license for us to operate the Ronald McDonald House under its brand, has ordered that family rooms must remain closed until health officials determine it is safe to reopen. We don't know when that will happen.

[Click here](#) for information about hotels in the UAB area.

### **HAVE THE LACTATION SUPPORT SERVICES CHANGED DURING THE PANDEMIC?**

UAB Lactation Services is available 7 days a week. The only change to Lactation Services at this time is that there are no in-person outpatient visits. Patients who need outpatient lactation services can call if they have questions or concerns, and someone from Lactation Services will be in contact with them to help.

### **IS THERE STILL FAMILY LIAISON SUPPORT FOR PARENTS OF BABIES IN THE NICU?**

Our family nurse liaison is available to help you navigate and document your NICU journey through the Beads of Courage program. There is continued family support through collaboration with March of Dimes, including Zoom online parent education sessions and family support groups. The UAB Arts in Medicine team is also helping to provide some art projects that can be completed in the baby's room.

### **ARE PRENATAL CLASSES STILL AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME?**

Yes, prenatal classes are still available, but there are no in-person classes. All prenatal courses are being taught online using Zoom at this time. The classes we are offering are the New Life Series (general childbirth series) and the Breastfeeding Class. There are virtual Labor and Delivery tours [located here](#). The UAB Health Class website ([uabhealthclass.com](http://uabhealthclass.com)) continues to be the most comprehensive website for expecting parents, offering information on parenting classes and registration, free childbirth education videos, medical information videos, and links to various online classes (some classes charge a fee).

### **IF I AM HAVING PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS, CAN I STILL COME IN THROUGH THE MATERNITY EMERGENCY AREA?**

Yes, the Maternity Evaluation Unit is open and seeing patients 24/7. All requirements for masks and PPE are being followed. You also may call the Maternity Evaluation Unit 24/7 at (205) 975-6105 to speak directly to a health care professional.

# INTERIM\* CONSIDERATIONS FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION OF PREGNANT OR LACTATING WOMEN

Evidence suggests that pregnant women may have an increased risk for severe COVID-19-related illness and death compared to non-pregnant women. This highlights the importance of preventing disease in this population, including getting vaccinations.

- The current data on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant or breastfeeding women is insufficient, which makes it difficult to provide vaccine recommendations.
- The first vaccines available do not contain a live virus. Instead, they produce an immune response by using genetic material that breaks down quickly in the human body. Therefore, you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine itself.
- There is only a small chance currently available vaccines cross the placenta, and so the theoretical risk of fetal harm from the COVID-19 vaccine is considered to be low.
- Based on the way the current vaccines work, risk to the breastfeeding child is unlikely, and the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risk. You do not have to delay or stop breastfeeding if you receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine currently recommend that **eligible pregnant and lactating women should be offered the vaccine**. Pregnant women are encouraged to speak with their health care providers and make an informed decision about whether to receive the vaccine.

For more information, please visit these websites:

- [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org) - [Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19](#)
- [SMFM Vaccine Statement 12-1-20](#)
- [COVID Vaccine Advice if You Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)
- [Provider Considerations for Engaging in COVID-19 Vaccine Counseling With Pregnant and Lactating Patients](#)

\*Updates to these considerations will be provided, when available and appropriate.