

Bay View Ob/Gyn Statement Concerning Obstetrical Recommendations during COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 is a highly contagious and therefore easily spread illness. You could be exposed prior to having any symptoms of the illness. Pregnancy decreases your immune response and makes you more susceptible to contagious illnesses. Evidence thus far does not seem to suggest any increased risk for severe illness or death to you or your baby, however, you may be more likely to catch this virus. You may be at increased risk if you have other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or asthma complicating your pregnancy. Due to the recommendations of social distancing, we are currently only allowing one support person for the labor, delivery and postpartum period. This person should plan to stay with you the duration of your hospital stay. We are also allowing a doula (must provide certification or licensure) if you plan to have one as well.

Information concerning the risk to newborn infants born to COVID-19 positive patients is limited at this time. The policy at McLaren Northern Michigan is to have any pregnant patients with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) to present to the emergency department for evaluation. We have partnered with Munson Medical Center in Traverse City to accept pregnant patients requiring hospitalization for COVID-19 due to the availability of a NICU and high-risk obstetrical services. We are prepared on our Labor and Delivery unit to care for a COVID-19 positive mom in labor while keeping the rest of our unit isolated. The current policy at Munson is to separate the COVID-19 positive mother from her newborn infant initially to avoid newborn illness. We realize this has an impact on bonding and breastfeeding. The above policies may change as the pandemic evolves. The best way to avoid this possibility is to avoid exposure to the illness. We have listed recommendations below to minimize your risk of exposure and illness for you and your labor partner:

Maintaining Social Spacing and Good Hygiene

- Work from home when possible. If this is not an option, when you reach 36 weeks or more in the pregnancy, we recommend that you consider leaving the workforce and begin maternity leave to avoid exposure/illness near the time of delivery. This will reduce the possibility of you being separated from your newborn. This is not considered a disability recommendation. You will need to discuss the consequences of this action with your workplace in terms of benefits and pay.
- We are also providing telemedicine to reduce the need for office visits
- Stay home and avoid non-essential activity and social gatherings, even with family members that live outside your home.
- Have someone else do the shopping and errands

- Limit visitors in your home
- Everyone, including yourself, should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds BEFORE contact with others and surfaces in your home. This will decrease contaminating your loved ones and your home
- Avoid take-out and delivery food items that are not in original packaging
- If you MUST go out, consider this following:
 - Wear a fabric covering over your mouth and nose (scarf, bandana, etc) so that you avoid touching your mouth and nose until you can return home and wash your hands
 - Touch as few objects, surfaces, and other people as possible
 - Maintain spacing of 6 feet as much as possible. This includes avoiding hugging, kissing, handshakes, etc.
 - If you don't have access to soap and water, use hand sanitizer or antiseptic wipes

Recommendations Concerning Avoiding Exposure & Illness to You and Others if Someone in Your Home Is COVID-19 Positive or Under Investigation

- They should consider wearing a covering over their mouth and nose even within your home, you should too. This decreases exposure to the virus
- They should be in isolation within your home or live elsewhere if possible for approximately seven days from the time they are symptom-free or two weeks following positive test result if without symptoms
- They should separate from the rest of the occupants in the home to reduce exposure to everyone else. If possible they should have a room to themselves to rest and recover. You should not sleep in the same room if possible.
- If they must share spaces with others, try to maintain six feet distance
- They should not eat in the same spaces, especially at the same time, with yourself and others
- They should not prepare food for others. Someone else should prepare food for them if possible. If they need to use the kitchen, they should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after touching surfaces and handling food items
- These surfaces should be wiped down either with soap and water or sanitizing solutions

- They should use disposable items for eating and drinking. Discard them immediately. Non-disposable items should immediately be placed in dishwasher or washed with soap and hot water. Wash hands after handling these items
- They should use a separate bathroom if possible. They should sanitize the surfaces after use and wash hands before and after touching surfaces. If they are not well enough to do so, someone else should do it.

We sincerely have you and your baby's best interests in mind. If you have any further questions please discuss them with your provider or call our office at (231)

487-2340