

Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Pregnancy

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce Maternity Unit is closely monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and will provide updated information as it comes to hand. Currently there is limited information on the effects of COVID-19 in pregnancy, however a preliminary study suggests no mother to newborn transmission. A small study of nine pregnant women with confirmed COVID-2019 in Wuhan, China, found no evidence that the virus leads to severe adverse outcomes for newborn infants, or that it can be passed to the child while in the womb.

Advice for Pregnant Women

While there is limited information on the novel coronavirus currently, we do know that pregnant women especially should be vigilant when it comes to reducing the risk of infections. When a woman is pregnant, her immune system changes, making her more susceptible to respiratory infections - which is why it is also important to vaccinate against whooping cough and influenza. Pregnant women are encouraged to discuss their concerns and, in particular, to report any early symptoms to a midwife, their obstetrician or GP in a timely manner. Although there is no vaccination for the novel coronavirus, there are established precautions that pregnant women can take.

Preventative Measures

- Practice good hand hygiene – wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, particularly after going to the toilet and before eating food. Alcohol based hand rub is an acceptable alternative;
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, and encourage others to do the same. Make sure you put the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands; and
- Where possible, keep one metre away from people who have a respiratory illness.
- Pregnant women are advised to avoid all non-essential overseas travel. While it will not influence response to Covid-19 infection, everyone will reduce their risk of influenza through vaccination.

Additional Information

Information and advice to the general public applies equally to pregnant women.

Source: *The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne* and *RANZCOG Coronavirus (COVID-19)*