



COVID-19 FAQs for Pregnant People

To our pregnant people, their support people and whānau,

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a lot of changes and adjustments over the past two years, and we are grateful for your understanding. With the recent emergence of the Omicron variant, changes are likely to come more quickly and the possible impact on pregnancy care and healthcare services are being managed carefully.

We are committed to continuing to provide care for you during this time. This information sheet aims to answer questions that you may have about what to expect, and to describe how to keep both you and your healthcare team as safe as possible through the next phase of the pandemic.

➤ *How can I avoid getting COVID-19?*

The best defence remains vaccination, ensuring that you have had your full vaccination course, which means having your booster vaccination as soon as you are eligible. Good hand hygiene, mask use and social distancing still remain important tools.

We will likely be using telephone consultation instead of face-to-face appointments, where this is clinically appropriate. Some face-to-face appointments will be required but the location may be different.

➤ *Do I need to get tested?*

Identifying pregnant people and their whānau who are infected with COVID-19 is critical for determining the best way to plan care for people, and to keep our healthcare staff safe so that they can continue to provide care to you and others. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, or have been exposed to a person who is COVID-positive, please contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453 and arrange to get tested. Before seeing your Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) midwife or doctor tell them if you have symptoms or are waiting for COVID-19 swab results.

➤ *What will happen to my care if I get COVID-19?*

Your LMC midwife and the obstetric team will make a plan for your care if you are infected with COVID-19, or have been a close contact. The risk that you will become seriously unwell from the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus is low, especially if you have been triple vaccinated (meaning that you have also had your booster). This is different from other COVID-19 strains, such as Delta.

If you get a positive swab then please, let your LMC midwife and doctor know.

Your LMC midwife will discuss your care with a hospital doctor if you are over 20 weeks pregnant and you will get a reminder about what you need to look out for. You may get a phone call with the hospital team or have a face-to-face appointment, depending on your individual situation. Talk with your LMC midwife or go to www.ccdhb.org.nz or www.huttmaternity.org.nz to see the latest information about support people. We want to ensure you have support where possible.

➤ *Will my midwife be able to provide my pregnancy care?*

We are committed to continuing to provide care to pregnant people and their whānau.

The first person to call is your LMC midwife to make plans about how you can be reviewed. Phone ahead so we can plan how we provide this care for you.

If you are COVID-positive or self-isolating, please call 0800 525 166 (Wellington) and ask for the 'birthing suite' or 0800 488 628 (Hutt Valley) option 2 for the 'delivery suite'. Remember to tell them if you are COVID-positive or self-isolating.

If your LMC midwife is themselves sick or isolating, they will have someone else looking after their clients. The LMC midwife will ensure you are informed about who to call. The hospital is always there for pregnant people who need care. All of our staff are fully vaccinated and are protected as much as possible. You can help to protect other people by ensuring that you have been fully vaccinated, wear a mask, wash your hands regularly, and get tested if you develop symptoms.

➤ **What can I do to prepare for COVID-19?**

There are some things you can do to prepare for this infection as there is a high chance we will all come into contact with COVID-19 at some stage:

- Get vaccinated and boosted as soon as you are eligible. This is safe any time before, during, or after pregnancy.
- Wear a mask when you go out. Situations where you may be close to unmasked people will be higher risk e.g. cafés or restaurants.
- Wash and/or sanitise your hands regularly.
- Think about what you might need if you suddenly have to stay at home to isolate (see links below) and make a plan. Talk with friends and whānau about how you could support each other.
- Know the symptoms which mean you should call and be assessed – these are called 'red flags' (there is a list of these below)
- Have a supply of simple medicines you can use if you get a cold or flu e.g. paracetamol (ibuprofen is not safe in pregnancy). Ask your LMC midwife or doctor if the medicines you are considering taking are safe during pregnancy.

Some good places to get help can be found at:

- **General information**
<https://covid19.govt.nz>
- **Be prepared for COVID-19**
<https://covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/be-prepared-for-covid-19>
- **COVID-19: Our Isolation Plan**
<https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/posters/COVID-19-Readiness-Checklist.pdf>
- **Getting extra support if you have Covid-19 or are self-isolating**
<https://covid19.govt.nz/isolation-and-care/getting-extra-support-if-you-have-covid-19-or-are-self-isolating>

➤ **RED FLAGS:**

- If you have any of the following you should call and get assessed

- If your baby is not moving / or is moving less than normal
- Vaginal bleeding
- Pain in your puku / abdomen
- Fluid leaking from your vagina
- A headache that does not get better with paracetamol

- If you get COVID-19 you will be sent a list of red flags for COVID. If you have anything on that list then you should call and get assessed.

➤ **If you are feeling anxious or low then you can call or text 1737 to speak to a trained counsellor – this is free.**

➤ **Who can I contact if I have any queries?**

You can firstly speak to your LMC or your doctor. The websites www.ccdhb.org.nz or www.huttmaternity.org.nz and www.covid19.govt.nz have lots of useful information.