

Care during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period during Covid-19

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we have had to make some difficult decisions about the way your maternity care is provided. We recognise that this will affect you all in different ways and we want to reassure you that the current measures are in place to ensure the safety of women, their babies and families, and our staff. These measures are reviewed daily, and in case of changes, we will provide you with an update. We will be working closely with the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership to ensure information is shared with you as quickly as possible.



This update will include:

- General information about the Sherwood Forest approach to COVID 19
- Some national links to further information
- Your care during pregnancy
- Your care during labour
- Your care after your baby is born

At Sherwood Forest Hospitals the staff are a family. We are here for you, your baby and your families. We could never take the place of your loved ones, but we will do our best. We will care for you to the utmost of our ability, show you our compassion and our drive. We will step into all roles and be the hand you need. We want to provide you with the care and compassion we would hope for our own loved ones.

Thank you
Penny Cole
Divisional Head of Nursing & Midwifery
Women and Childrens Division

Please note that some of the photos included in this update were taken before social distancing measures were introduced. All of our staff including support teams and community midwives are trained and equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help keep you, your families and the staff protected.



General information about the Sherwood Forest Hospitals approach

You will see that we are promoting social distancing on our sites by altering seating areas where we can, introducing 'stop and wait' points, and asking all patients who have symptoms of coronavirus (high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of taste or smell) to stay at home.

In addition, in line with government guidance from 15 June 2020 all women and their partners are asked to wear a face covering or mask when attending the hospital.

We are working to provide telephone or video consultations where it is possible to do this, so that our clinics are less crowded.

All of our staff are trained in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including when and how this should be worn. Not everyone you see will be wearing a mask/gloves/apron, if you have any questions about this please ask your midwife. We are following national guidance on PPE which is subject to change.

We have identified and equipped separate areas in the hospital to care for patients with Covid-19. Our maternity unit and neonatal unit also have separate isolation areas identified. We provide hand washing facilities and alcohol hand gel for use at the entrance to all wards and departments.

If you are worried about yourself or your baby, please get in touch. Your care will be provided by midwives (and doctors where necessary) in the normal way. We can make safe arrangements for you and your baby even if you have symptoms.

Home, Community, Hospital.

Healthier Communities, Outstanding Care

Links for further information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/>

<https://babylifeline.org.uk/home/covid19/>

<https://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/infant-feeding/>

Home, Community, Hospital.

Your care during pregnancy

Should I still attend my antenatal appointments in the community?

We want to take good care of you and your baby. Your appointments are essential to monitor the health of yourself and your baby. You should still attend antenatal appointments with your community midwife unless you have been told otherwise. You should attend alone, but **if you or a member of your household is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolating or shielding please do not attend** and contact the community midwife's advice line on 01623 676170 for further guidance.

Will hospital appointments including scans still be running?

Antenatal care is essential so hospital appointments will still be carried out. **You should attend all hospital appointments including scans alone unless told otherwise.** You may receive a call from an 'unknown number' up to 48 hours prior to your appointment, please answer as it may be one of our team trying to get in touch. If you do need a telephone consultation, this will be arranged at the same time as your original hospital appointment.

You can expect to be asked some personal questions so that the hospital team can identify you when they call, for example full name and date of birth. **You will not be asked for any other information such as bank or credit card details.**

Will I be able to film or Face time my scan as my partner is not allowed to come?

Unfortunately, filming, video and/or telephone calls are not permitted during scans following guidelines. Your scan is a clinical diagnostic procedure and requires the full time and attention of our sonographers.

A recent National position statement from The Society and College of Radiographers has suggested that where available a small video clip could be offered to women but unfortunately at Sherwood Forest Hospitals our equipment and data storage is not able to support this option.

If you would like to find out the sex of your baby during your scan, please ask your sonographer. This becomes part of the clinical process and the results will be discussed with you at the time and included in your pregnancy records as part of the documentation. Please remember that 100% accuracy cannot be guaranteed when determining the sex of the baby.

We understand how disappointing it is for you to attend your scan appointments alone, and we will provide you with two scan photographs free of charge to take home and share with your loved ones.

As antenatal classes are cancelled, is there any further information I can receive?

We are exploring online options to provide you with more antenatal and postnatal support. At the moment, we are using Zoom to conduct feeding support sessions online – to access these please ask your community midwife or contact the Lime Green team directly by emailing; Sfh-tr.infantfeeding@nhs.net, including your contact details and due date.

We hope to provide additional options in the coming weeks and will offer more information about this when it is available.



Patient Testing for COVID-19

In line with National Guidance any women who come in to hospital and need to stay will now be tested for COVID-19 . This will include women who are not showing any symptoms. The testing will be done via a swab taken from the nose and the mouth.

We will tell you the result of your swab whether they are positive or negative and what to do next even if you have been discharged home. Please remember that you may have a positive result and still not have any symptoms.

If you have any questions you can call still call and speak to a midwife on the number on your hand held records.

Your care during labour (including information about visitors)

Sherwood Forest Hospitals currently has a 'no visitors' policy – there are specific exceptions to this including end of life care, and birth partners.

The maternity team welcomes birth partners and recognises how important it is for women to experience support and comfort from a trusted partner during labour and birth. Please make sure that your partner does not have any symptoms, high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Please also be assured that we are reviewing our policies regularly and recognise that your experience during labour and birth is an important aspect of family life. We aim to respond quickly and appropriately to social distancing guidelines and all of the details below are subject to change.

Labour:

Please initially come in on your own, we would ask your birth partner to wait elsewhere while a plan is made. When you are in established labour, your birth partner is welcome to join you. You are unable to bring any other children with you into the hospital building. Please make arrangements for care of other children in advance of your due date. If this isn't possible, then your partner will have to remain at home for childcare and you can arrange an alternative birth partner who is

symptom-free. If you are unable to bring a birth partner, then please know that, as always, our midwives are there to fully support you throughout your labour and birth.

Our birth pool is still available as long as you do not have symptoms of or have been confirmed to have Covid-19.

Induction of labour:

If you are coming in for an induction, then unfortunately your birth partner is unable to attend with you initially. They are able to help you with your bags up to the door of the maternity ward, if you require any help then please ask a member of our team, we will be happy to help you. When in established labour you will be transferred to the birthing unit, where one birth partner is then able to be with you. The midwife looking after you will let you know when to contact them. Please note that it can take around 24-48 hours for labour to start after an induction process, your midwife can tell you more about this.

Caesarean section:

If your Caesarean section is planned, please follow the instructions that you receive from the team (midwives and doctors) in the days leading up to your operation.

On very rare occasions it may be necessary to change the date of your operation at very short notice, we will keep you informed on an individual basis.

Your birth partner is welcome to join you on the day of your Caesarean section and can be present during the operation as is our normal practice.

If you need to have a Caesarean section as an emergency, your birth partner can be present during the operation as is our normal practice.

For planned and emergency Caesarean sections there may be rare occasions when your partner is not able to be present. You will be kept informed by the team looking after you.

Home births

We are pleased to say that we will be offering a home birth service on a case by case basis from 1 June 2020 , with a full service anticipated in the following weeks

(further update in due course). If you are planning a home birth please make sure your midwife is aware so that individual plans can be fully discussed.

If you are worried about coming into hospital to give birth, please talk it through with your midwife. Our Sherwood Birthing Unit offers a safe and private environment, including birth pool availability, and a team of experienced and supportive midwives. We can help you to make an alternative birth plan if this is required.

Your care after your baby is born

After your baby is born, including if you have a Caesarean section, you and your birth partner can have some private time together on the Sherwood Birthing Unit. This is usually a few hours. You may be able to go home together from here, and we would encourage you to do that if possible. Alternatively, mum and baby will be transferred to the maternity ward and partners will need to go home until discharge can be arranged.

There are no visitors allowed on the maternity ward for the safety of our women, babies and staff due to COVID-19. This remains under review and we would ask for your continued understanding and patience.

Going home (discharge): As a team we are trying to discharge you and your baby home as effectively and safely as possible as long as you both are fit and well. If you need an overnight stay with us, then we will provide you with the highest standard of care and compassion. We understand this is a daunting experience but if assistance is needed just press the call buzzer or find a member of the team and we will be happy to help you. If you need to stay in longer, we will do our best to get you a side room.

There is a free WI-FI service at King's Mill Hospital so that you are able to facetime or skype family members. Please be respectful if you are in a bay with other women.

When you are discharged, your partner/family member is welcome to come and collect you. Our staff will help you and your baby to meet your partner at the door of

the maternity unit or downstairs in the main foyer. Please make sure whoever is collecting you has no symptoms of Covid-19 or is currently self-isolating/shielding. They do not need to wear a mask or gloves to collect you just ensure regular hand washing is practised.

Registering the birth:

Registration of births has been suspended until further notice.

You are able to claim Child Benefit without having your baby registered at this time.

Please make sure you keep checking the government website to see when you are able to register your baby's birth. Below are links for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/births/book-appointment>

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/community/births-deaths-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/births/registering-a-birth.aspx>

Postnatal visits:

As a result of Covid--19 community midwives are limiting the visits they undertake in their working day. If you receive a call from a withheld or private number, please answer. Below are the minimum visits that you will receive but if you require any additional support then please contact the telephone numbers on the front of your handheld notes.

The day after you come

home from hospital:

A community midwife will telephone you to assess how you and baby are doing, they will then discuss with you whether you require a visit or not. They will then arrange your **day 5 appointment** at Mansfield Community Hospital, Stockwell Gate, NG18 5QJ

Day 5:

You will need to take your baby to the Mansfield Community Hospital alone. The midwife will do a full postnatal check of you and baby, weigh baby and carry out the newborn blood spot test: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/newborn-blood-spot-test/> Please remember to bring your handheld notes and the blood spot form given to you when you left the hospital.

Your midwife will fill out a form with you in order to register your baby at your GP practice.

Day 10-14:

A health visitor will make telephone contact with you and arrange for you to attend a clinic to weigh your baby. Please take this opportunity to have your baby weighed as you will be unlikely to have another face to face contact with the midwife.

Around day 17:

A midwife will call you to ensure you and your baby are well. If you are, they will discharge you into the care of your Health Visitor. If you still have your handheld notes you will be asked to return them to your GP practice when convenient or at your 6-8 weeks appointment.

Other issues

Physiotherapy referrals:

Your midwife/GP can still refer you to physiotherapy for pregnancy related aches and pains.

You will NOT need to attend hospital for a physiotherapy appointment.

The physiotherapy team will ring you to complete a telephone assessment. From there, they have lots of great electronic resources they can share with you as indicated.

For common aches and pains including pelvic girdle pain please see link [https://pogp.csp.org.uk/system/files/publication_files/POGP-PGP\(Pat\)\(UL\).pdf](https://pogp.csp.org.uk/system/files/publication_files/POGP-PGP(Pat)(UL).pdf)

If you sustain a serious tear (called a 3rd degree tear) during your birth, you will receive a follow-up call from the physio team at around 4-8 weeks postnatal. The clinician will consider very carefully if you need to be brought into the department for examination. If they do decide you should come in, they will arrange a date and time, you should attend alone and without your baby.

Worries/concerns:

Please contact the numbers on your handheld notes as normal, a midwife will offer advice and support as to whether you need assessment.

Please ask your partner, family member, friend who has no symptoms of Covid-19 or is not currently isolating to bring you and wait in the car for a plan to be made.

On some occasions it may be that the midwife may feel it is reasonable for your birth partner to attend with you and wait before coming onto the birthing unit.

THANK YOU
Your SFH Midwifery Team

