ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ON

PREGNANCY & COVID-19

Since this form of coronavirus (which causes COVID-19) is new, research is underway to learn as much about it as possible. Currently, the data suggests that pregnant women are NOT at an increased risk of severe illness compared to the general public. This is very good news for pregnant women and their babies.

We also know that pregnant women have changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of infections. It is very important for pregnant women to follow guidance to stay home as much as possible and take extra steps to protect against COVID-19.

COVID-19 has changed life dramatically for everyone. Staying safe at home is critical to stop the spread of COVID-19, which means many in-person classes have been cancelled, including birth and breastfeeding classes. To help prepare for your bundle of joy, virtual classes may be an option. Reach out to your OBGYN, midwife, doula, home visitor or other pregnancy/breastfeeding support team members to learn about virtual classes as well as other online support during pregnancy and after your baby arrives.

MI RESILIENCE

Resources For Your Pregnancy & Beyond

Help is out there. Here are places you can look.

COVID-19 Mental Health Resources
Michigan.gov/StayWell

Maternal and Infant Health
Michigan.gov/miheip

Michigan Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
Michigan.gov/WIC

Michigan Home Visiting Program Finder
MIHomeVisiting.com

Find community assistance
MI211.org

Apply for assistance with food, housing, insurance and childcare
Michigan.gov/MiBridges

Stay Healthy!

There are simple actions you can take to prevent illness.

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, if water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away the tissue right away and wash your hands.
- Keep space between yourself and people you do not live with (at least 6 feet) and avoid crowded places.
- Wear a cloth face covering if you must go out in public. Be sure it covers your nose and mouth.
- Don't forget to get the Tdap vaccine at 26-37 weeks gestation and the flu vaccine during the flu season.

Create a family plan in case you or someone in your household becomes ill. Identify a trusted adult who could care for your newborn if needed. Start a household plan: michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Prevent_and_Prepare_Final_687282_7.pdf

Feeling Under The Weather?

If you have symptoms like shortness of breath, cough, fever, or are otherwise worried about your health, contact your doctor and follow their medical guidance.

If you or someone you live with has been diagnosed with COVID-19, tell your healthcare provider before visits so they can appropriately treat you and/or your newborn and stop the spread of the illness.

Feeling Unsafe?

Abuse at home is known as intimate partner violence or domestic violence. Abuse can get worse during pregnancy and during times of crisis.

National Domestic Violence Hotline (24/7)

- 800-799-SAFE (7233) or 800-787-3224(TTY)
- Text LOVEIS to 22522
- Live chat at thehotline.org

Michigan resources for domestic and sexual violence: Michigan.gov/DomesticViolence

Learn about intimate partner violence: acog.org/patient-resources/faqs/womens-health/intimate-partner-violence

Physical Health Matters

Mental well-being goes hand in hand with physical well-being. Taking care of your physical health will help you feel better emotionally, and help you be more patient and calm during times of increased stress. This is always important, but especially during pregnancy, delivery and after baby arrives.

- Rest when you can.
- Eat healthy meals – avoid excess caffeine and sugar to regulate mood and get appropriate nutrients.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Get regular exercise, and try to plan time every day to get outside.

Before Delivery

Talk with your doctor about prenatal visits:

- Will any visits be virtual? Phone call or video?
- Will your visit schedule change – spaced out differently than originally planned?
- Does the office provide any supplies?

For in-hospital delivery, call your birthing hospital and ask:

- Have there been any changes or restrictions in their practices due to COVID-19? Any changes to rooming in, skin-to-skin or breastfeeding support practices?
- What is the support person policy? Who may join you during delivery?
- Are there restrictions on who may visit?
- Are there virtual support options? Do you need to supply your own device?
- Who can be your back-up (like a doula or other family member) in case your chosen support person(s) cannot join you?

FACTS

DID YOU KNOW?

The virus has not been found in amniotic fluid.

There is no evidence that a pregnant mother who has COVID-19 passes the virus to her baby during pregnancy or delivery – there is ongoing research about this.

There is NO evidence that a caesarean (C-section) is necessary to deliver the baby of a woman who has COVID-19.

- ◯ Create a birth plan: marchofdimes.org/materials/March-of-Dimes-Birth-Plan-2020.pdf
- ◯ Talk with your family and doctor about how you want to feed your baby.
- ◯ Prepare a safe place for baby to sleep - such as a crib, bassinet or pack n' play. For more information: Michigan.gov/SafeSleep
- ◯ Select and install your newborn car seat appropriately in the vehicle your newborn will ride home in. For more information: safekids.org/car-seat
- ◯ Pack a bag for you and your baby for the hospital.
- ◯ Make time for yourself: listen to music, read, rest, exercise and stay hydrated.
- ◯ Prepare meals and freeze them for quick re-heating.

If you need help planning for baby or obtaining a safe sleep space, resources include:

- Your local health department
- Your local MDHHS office
- 2-1-1
- Your local home visiting program

Find resources on page 1.

Delivery

- Bring a copy of your birth plan to the birthing site, share with your delivery team
- Share health concerns with your provider - for example fever, cough, headache, etc.
- Capture special moments with your phone and/or camera
- Only bring the items you really need for a 1-5 day stay
- Ask about newborn screening: michigan.gov/newbornscreening

Postpartum - After Delivery

Hold and touch your baby after delivery. Close contact and early, exclusive breastfeeding helps babies thrive. You should be supported to:

- have skin-to-skin time
- share a room with your baby, and
- breastfeed safely.

Know the early warning signs for postpartum hemorrhage (bleeding) and hypertension (high blood pressure) emergencies. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms below, are not feeling well, or have any concerns about your physical health, alert your healthcare provider immediately.

Hemorrhage And Hypertension Warning Signs

- Swelling in feet or legs
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Heavy bleeding
- Blurred vision
- Feeling weak or faint

All women have the right to a safe and positive childbirth experience. This is true even during a public health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more about caring for your newborn during COVID-19
michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Newborn_Guide_691445_7.pdf

Learn about breastfeeding your baby during COVID-19
michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Breastfeeding_During_COVID-19_691443_7.pdf

Learn about postpartum depression on page 5.

Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression (also called PPD) is a medical condition that many women get after having a baby. It is strong feelings of **sadness**, **anxiety** (worry), and **tiredness** that may last for a long time after giving birth. These feelings can make it hard for you to take care of yourself and your baby. PPD can happen any time after childbirth. It often starts within 1 to 3 weeks of having a baby. This is not your fault and many women experience PPD - it is the most common problem for new mothers. There are many ways to manage and treat PPD.

If you have signs or symptoms of PPD, don't assume it's just the "Baby Blues" or that you can tough it out. There are things you and your provider can do to help you feel better.

Signs & Symptoms of Postpartum Depression

Changes in your feelings

- Feeling depressed most of the day, every day
- Feeling shame, guilt, or like a failure
- Feeling panicked or scared a lot of the time
- Having severe mood swings

Changes in your every day life

- Loss of interest in things you normally like
- Feeling tired all the time
- Eating a lot more or a lot less than normal
- Gaining or losing weight
- Having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Having trouble concentrating or making decisions

Changes in how you think about yourself or your baby

- Having trouble bonding with your baby
- Thinking about hurting yourself or your baby
- Thinking about suicide (killing yourself)

Leave a confidential message 24/7 and a volunteer will return your call or text as soon as possible.

Postpartum Support International Helpline

- English: 1-800-985-5950 or text 503-894-9453
- Spanish: 971-420-0294
- Online support groups: postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings

If you are worried about harming yourself or your baby, taking your own life, or are in a state of crisis call 911 and seek immediate care.

Caring For Your Mental Health

The stress of COVID-19 is something that all people are experiencing, however pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and becoming a new parent can each create unique worries and concerns. There are many resources available to support you.
Create a resilience plan on page 8.

It is so important to seek healthy activities, find ways to decrease and manage stress, and cope with worries and fears early on. Try several techniques – discover activities you enjoy and fit into your daily life.
Find mindfulness techniques on page 7.

Monitor yourself for signs of increased stress (distress reactions) and risky health behaviors (high risk behaviors). If you notice these reactions or behaviors, alert a family member or close friend. Reach out to your healthcare provider to discuss your stress and seek additional support.

Distress Reactions

- Insomnia or excessive sleepiness
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Scapegoating - placing blame on others
- Decreased feeling of safety
- Loss of self-worth and seeking others' approval

High Risk Behaviors

- Inability to concentrate
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- Social isolation
- Family conflict
- Connecting with those using alcohol and drugs
- Taking "extra" medication to ease stress
- Trading one addictive behavior for another
- Working extra or inability to focus on work

You're Never Alone

Get immediate crisis counseling 24/7 if you're feeling distress.

National Disaster Distress Helpline

- 1-800-985-5990

Michigan Crisis Text Line

- Text RESTORE to 741741

Get immediate support 24/7 if you're having thoughts of suicide.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 1-800-273-8255
- Text TALK to 741741

If you live with a serious mental illness, talk to a peer with similar experiences.

Michigan Peer Warmline

- 888-733-7753
- Daily 10 a.m.–2 a.m.

Simple Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness is one way to lessen the effects of stress – emotionally and physically. These techniques promote being present, in the moment, and mindful.

Sit outside in the sun. Feel the heat of the rays on you. Appreciate how far the rays have traveled just to reach you.

Walk around. Feel as much as you can - notice the grass, pebbles, or soft carpet under your feet.

Deep breathing. Take long, slow breaths at the top of the hour, or set a reminder on your phone throughout the day.

Look at the night sky. Appreciate how delicate the stars and moon appear. Admire the twinkling lights - maybe notice a satellite or shooting star.

Sit quietly. Feel the breath coming and going from your chest, through your nose. Feel how the breath is cool as you inhale and warm as you exhale.

Write in a journal. Write down happy moments you can look back on when you're feeling anxious or stressed. Acknowledge the appreciation you feel for the things around you.

Grounding Technique

A grounding technique can help decrease anxiety and anger when you are feeling overwhelmed.

Think 5-4-3-2-1 as you notice:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste

Try the free app for meditation, sleep, and movement exercises.

Headspace.com/mi

Stress Resilience Plan

Think about how you overcame challenges in the past.

- ◯ How did you get started?
- ◯ How did you stay motivated to continue your recovery?
- ◯ Who was supportive during difficult times in the past? Reach out to them for support now.
- ◯ What useful advice did someone give you that can be shared with someone else in need of help?
- ◯ Keep using your resources - people, skills, and groups.
- ◯ Know your personal signs of stress - act to reduce stress before it spins out of control.

Take care of your mental health.

- ◯ Keep in touch with family and friends. Reach out by text, calls, or video chats.
- ◯ Try humor to reduce stress - when appropriate.
- ◯ Give yourself permission to feel upset or scared.
- ◯ Schedule check-ins with supporters.
- ◯ Limit media exposure: take time daily to digitally unplug.

Take care of your physical health.

- ◯ Eat healthy: Vegetables, protein and water while limiting sugar and caffeine to regulate mood and energy.
- ◯ Exercise: Try an online class or tutorial for yoga. Take a walk or hike to regulate stress and promote mindfulness.
- ◯ Sleep: Get adequate rest daily.
- ◯ Self-care: What do I do regularly for self-care? Can I add more activity to my routine?

Create routine and structure.

- ◯ Keep a daily routine as much as possible. This helps curb stress.
- ◯ Maintain your sleep cycle - consistent times to wake up and go to sleep.
- ◯ What is the best time of day for you to exercise? Plan daily and weekly exercise.
- ◯ When is it easiest to get in touch with others? Schedule calls and virtual meetings.
- ◯ Plan time to get outside every day.