

## **2. Advice for health professionals to share with pregnant women**

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### 2.1 General advice

As a pregnant woman the news that you were placed in a 'vulnerable group' by the Chief Medical Officer on Monday 16 March 2020 may have caused you concern.

We would like to reiterate that the evidence we have so far is that pregnant women are still no more likely to contract the infection than the general population. What we do know is that pregnancy in a small proportion of women can alter how your body handles severe viral infections. This is something that midwives and obstetricians have known for many years and are used to dealing with.

What has driven the decisions made by officials is the need to restrict spread of illness because if the number of infections were to rise sharply the number of severely infected women could rise and this could put the lives of some pregnant women in danger.

#### Our general advice is that:

- If you are infected with COVID-19 you are still most likely to have no symptoms or a mild illness from which you will make a full recovery
- If you develop more severe symptoms or your recovery is delayed, this may be a sign that you are developing a more significant chest infection that requires enhanced care, and our advice remains that if you feel your symptoms are worsening or if you are not getting better you should contact your maternity care team, NHS 111 or local alternative straight away for further information and advice.

### 2.2 Advice regarding social distancing and self-isolation

The UK Chief Medical Officer has decided that, given the limited information currently available about how COVID-19 could affect pregnancy, it would be prudent for pregnant women to increase their social distancing to reduce the risk of infection.

All pregnant women, regardless of gestation, should observe the social distancing guidance available on the Government website:

- 1) [For all vulnerable people including pregnant women](#) <sup>13</sup>
- 2) [For individuals and households of individuals with symptoms of new continuous cough or fever](#) <sup>14</sup>

You should pay particular attention to avoiding contact with people who are known to have COVID-19 or those who exhibit possible symptoms.

Women above 28 weeks' gestation should be particularly attentive to social distancing and minimising contact with others.

## **2.3 Advice regarding your appointments or urgent visits to clinics and hospitals**

If you are well at the moment and have had no complications in your previous pregnancies, the following practical advice may be helpful:

- If you have a routine scan or visit due in the coming days, please contact your maternity unit for advice and to agree a plan. You may still need to attend for a visit but the appointment may change due to staffing requirements.
- If you are between appointments, please wait to hear from your maternity team.

If you are attending more regularly in pregnancy, then your maternity team will be in touch with plans for further appointments, as required.

Whatever your personal situation please consider the following:

- If you have any concerns, you will be able to contact your maternity team as usual but please note they may take longer than usual to get back to you.
- If you have an urgent problem related to your pregnancy but not related to coronavirus, get in touch using the same emergency contact details you already have. Please do not contact this number unless you have an urgent problem.
- If you have symptoms of coronavirus, contact your maternity service and they will arrange the right place and time to come for your visits. You should not attend a routine clinic.
- You will be asked to keep the number of people with you to a minimum. This will include being asked to not bring children with you to maternity appointments.
- There may be a need to reduce the number of antenatal visits you have. This will be communicated with you. Do not reduce your number of visits without agreeing first with your maternity team.

At this time, it is particularly important that you help your maternity team take care of you. If you have had an appointment cancelled or delayed, and are not sure of your next contact with your maternity team, please let them know by using the contact numbers provided to you at booking.