

Welcome to Royal Columbian Hospital Maternity

You are being provided this information because you have either tested positive on a swab for COVID-19, or you are being tested for COVID-19 because of concerning symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. This is an extremely difficult time during the COVID-19 pandemic for the hospital, doctors, midwives and nurses, as well as you and your family.

Are there special precautions for me because I am COVID-19+?

Yes. There are special precautions we are required to take during this pandemic for you and your family's health, as well as for your care providers. Each patient affected by COVID-19 should have the following information early on so that you and your care team can make preparations to help you have a safe and healthy delivery.

Can my partner be in the room?

You may have one partner or support person provided:

- They do not have any COVID-19 symptoms
- They live with you
- They are not on isolation precautions at home

If your intended support person is ill, they are to wash their hands, put on a mask and go home/seek testing or medical attention.

Can I bring my own pillow and other items from home?

No, you may not bring in any items from home such as pillow or suitcase. If you have brought items with you, please have your support person store them safely for you or leave them in your vehicle. A small bag with personal hygiene items and a water bottle is fine.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread by **droplet** and **contact**. Your care team will place signage to clearly indicate this and take precautions to avoid droplets and contact.

Contact transmission is when an infected person coughs or sneezes onto a surface, someone else touches the surface containing the virus and then gets infected by touching their mouth, nose or eyes. This is why you will see your care team frequently washing their hands or using alcohol hand sanitizer. We will remind you and your partner as well.

Droplet transmission is when an infected person coughs or sneezes directly into the mouth, nose or eyes of a **nearby** person. This is why you will see your care team wearing a facemask and safety glasses throughout your care.

Will my care providers be wearing masks? Do I need to wear a mask?

Your **care providers** will be wearing gloves, gown, a mask, and safety glasses while in your room. During active delivery they will also wear a face shield.

We strongly suggest that our **COVID-19+ patients** wear a mask at all times during their stay to avoid infecting their partner, but especially during active labour when the chance of droplet transmission is higher.

Can COVID-19 be spread by airborne particles?

COVID-19 is **not** spread by airborne particles. Unfortunately, some medical procedures - called aerosol generating procedures - **will** generate airborne particles. These include insertion of a breathing tube (aka intubation), and breathing nitrous oxide (Entonox / "laughing gas"). Additional protective equipment is required for all care providers during these procedures, including an N95 mask, which requires individualized fitting and testing for each care provider.

What about: breastfeeding, skin to skin contact and delayed cord clamping?

We still support **skin-to-skin, delayed cord clamping, breastfeeding**, and babies **rooming in** with mothers as there is no evidence this is unsafe. Contact and droplet precautions will be observed for these.

Is there anything else I can do to prevent the spread during labour?

We suggest either **using an epidural** or having an **epidural sited**. An epidural is an individual's choice. There are risks and benefits to an epidural, which should be discussed with your care provider. Specific to COVID-19, we suggest either using an epidural or having an epidural sited, because:

- Reducing the pain of labour reduces the work of breathing and **prevents shortness of breath**

If a caesarean section is required, having an epidural greatly reduces the risk of needing to be put to sleep (**General Anesthetic** / "GA"), which requires intubation and therefore causes airborne transmission.

If I need a caesarean section, can my partner be in the room?

If you require a caesarean section, your partner is **not permitted** into the operating room. This is because there is always a possibility of needing intubation - the operating room is limited to essential personnel only, and your partner cannot safely wear and remove the N95 mask and the additional protective equipment.

We recognize that this is a lot of information. The steps we take in caring for you while affected by COVID-19 are meant to maintain the health of you, your family and your care providers. Please ask your care team any questions you have.