

This information is for pregnant women who have tested positive to Coronavirus (COVID-19), or are suspected COVID-19, and are being admitted to Flinders Medical Centre to birth.

We understand this will be a stressful and anxious time for you. Please be assured we will do all that we can to help and provide information, guidance and support to you during your stay.

Our priority will be ensuring that you and your baby receive safe, high-quality and respectful care while keeping our staff and other patients safe and minimising the risk of COVID-19 exposure to others.



What supports are available to me during this time?

Please reach out to our team to discuss any support services, we are here to help.

For more information about COVID-19:

Visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au or call the SA COVID-19 Information Line on **1800 253 787**

If you are **COVID-19 positive** and have any concerns, please call Health Direct on **1800 020 080**

Flinders Medical Centre:

Flinders Drive, Bedford Park SA 5042

For emergency maternity care please call:

8204 5511 and ask for the Birthing and Assessment Suite (BAS).

For Translating and Interpreting Service information:

Phone: **131 450** TIS National

This document is intended for information purposes only and does not replace discussion or advice that your healthcare team give you.



This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.

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FMC COVID-19 Maternity Care



Birthing information for COVID-19 Positive Women

Flinders Medical Centre

Effective 22 April 2022



Health
Southern Adelaide
Local Health Network

Can I have a support person with me?

You are able to have one support person stay with you for the duration of your birth. Your support person must stay in the room with you at all times and they must also wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including a mask. This person will only be able to stay with you for the duration of your birth and for a certain duration post birth, based on current restrictions. They will not be able to go into the Operating Theatre with you if you are required to have a Caesarean Section. They will need to remain in the Birthing and Assessment Suite until you and your baby return to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread to other areas of the hospital. If your support person needs to leave self-isolation/quarantine to attend hospital for the birth, please contact your healthcare team to apply for an exemption prior to leaving self-isolation/quarantine and before attending the hospital.

Please note: if your support person is COVID-19 positive and applying for an exemption they must be symptom free to minimise risk to other patients and our staff.

If you are unwell and being admitted to FMC for medical care related to COVID-19, and not expecting to deliver your baby, your support person is not able to come in with you or visit during this time.

What happens if I am COVID-19 positive and go into spontaneous labour?

If you go into spontaneous labour and are COVID-19 positive, please follow the usual pathway by calling 8204 5511 and ask for the Birthing and Assessment Suite (BAS).

If you need to make an unplanned visit to FMC, please also contact 82045511 and ask for the Birthing and Assessment Suite (BAS) who will provide you with information on where to present. Please ensure that you tell them you are COVID-19 positive so the team can prepare.

What happens if I have a Vaginal delivery?

You will be required to labour and birth in the same room, that is fully equipped with a shower, toilet and hand basin. Our midwives will continue to monitor you and your baby's progress dressed in full PPE.

Once your baby has been born, skin to skin contact will still be encouraged and you can also breastfeed, if you choose to do so.

It will be important for you to practice appropriate hand hygiene and wear a surgical mask to reduce the risk of transmission to your baby.

What will happen if I need an emergency caesarean section?

If you require an emergency caesarean section this process will follow the same pathway as non-COVID-19 positive patients, however, additional precautions will be in place to ensure you remain separate from other patients as you move through the hospital.

You will be taken to a designated operating theatre by your treating team for your caesarean section and you and your baby will receive postnatal care as required.

What will happen if I am having a planned caesarean section or induction of labour?

Your care team will be in contact with you to provide you with relevant information before your admission.

Once admitted to FMC, you will be safely escorted to your room and then on to the operating theatre for your caesarean section. You will move through the hospital via designated pathways to ensure the safety of our staff and other patients.

Can I have pain relief during labour?

The maternity team will discuss having an early epidural for pain relief if required.

What will happen after my baby is born?

Provided that your baby is well and doesn't require any further medical care, you and your baby will be kept together after you have given birth, until you go home.

The benefits of well babies and mothers staying together after birth outweighs the chance of babies becoming infected with COVID-19. In most reported cases of

newborn babies developing COVID-19 very soon after birth, the babies remained well or had mild illness only. You will be asked to wash or sanitise your hands and put on a surgical mask before you touch your baby, feed, cuddle or have skin-to-skin time, to reduce the chance of infecting your baby.

What happens if my baby needs to be admitted for care?

If your baby does need to be admitted to our Neonatal Unit for care, our doctors and nurses caring for your baby will ensure you are fully informed of the individual care for your baby as you are unable to leave your room.

Our staff will do everything they can to ensure that you can view your baby and that they can receive your expressed breastmilk (if you are planning to breastfeed).

Can I breastfeed if I have COVID-19?

Yes. Women who wish to breastfeed their babies are encouraged and supported to do so.

There is no evidence that COVID-19 is carried in breast milk and, therefore, the well-recognised benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of COVID-19 through breast milk.

Being fully vaccinated may also have benefits for your baby if you are breastfeeding.

If I give birth, where will I receive my postnatal care?

Your postnatal care will be tailored around your requirements for isolation/ quarantine. Please be reassured that our team of doctors, midwives and nurses will support you following the birth of your baby in the best way possible to ensure the safety of you and your baby.

Midwives and Neonatal Nurses from FMC will then provide care to you following your and your baby's discharge.

