

Covid-19 Pandemic Info and Peninsula Midwives Protocols

This document is to address the changes Peninsula Midwives continues to take to address the ongoing relevance of the Covid-19 on healthcare and this practice. This document is updated as appropriate, last done 4/2023. As we move forward in this world living alongside Covid, I believe it is important to evolve in a way that continues to hold community health and wellness at the forefront while acknowledging that some things are being let go. I wish to note that my approach to the pandemic continues to be a more cautious one as my husband remains at significantly higher risk than the general population. Additionally as a solo midwife, getting Covid means that I am out of commission from caring for my clients until recovered, potentially missing births, which is a circumstance I hope to avoid.

PREGNANCY AND COVID-19 RISKS

We continue to learn more about Covid infection's effect on pregnancy. Here's what what evidence seems to show at this point. (Most of this data from the indomitable research team led by Rebecca Dekker at [Evidence Based Birth](#). Check out her awesome collection of Covid Resources [here](#) which is updated regularly and includes research about Covid and Covid vaccines in pregnancy). It is worth noting that some of this research was done prior to vaccines being available or prior infections being more common.

- If you develop a Covid-19 infection in pregnancy, you have an increased risk of hospitalization, intubation/ICU admission compared to a non-pregnant woman/person of similar health status.
- At this time it appears that Covid-19 infection in pregnancy correlates with a small increased risk of low birthweight, preterm and stillbirth, preeclampsia and blood clots.
- People who went into labor with a Covid-19 infection are at higher risk of their condition deteriorating shortly after delivery.
- The risk of vertical transmission (mother/birther to newborn) is very small but not absent. Most babies that are born with Covid-19 infections do well.
- Newborns may be at risk for a more severe infection than older children. Breastfeeding with an active infection is still recommended based on the benefits of breastfeeding to the newborns immature immune system and the increased antibodies in breastmilk.
- Babies whose parent had an active Covid infection during pregnancy or received the vaccine during pregnancy, especially the 3rd trimester appear to be born with antibodies. How long those antibodies last is unknown.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Regular, thorough hand washing
- Follow the CDC as well as your local jurisdiction's recommendations regarding masking.
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home. If you are experiencing fever or respiratory symptoms, please reach out to me ASAP and test yourself for Covid.
- Consider ways in which you can close your exposure circle where possible starting at ~37 weeks gestation to optimize for a healthy family unit around the time of birth. **Please see below details of my protocols for illness of clients or their family and labor.**
- I have lots of great pregnancy safe, immune boosting suggestions. Please let me know if you're interested in a list!

COVID-19 VACCINATION IN PREGNANCY

The CDC, ACOG and WHO all recommend receiving the Covid vaccine in pregnancy as the research demonstrates that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh any possible risks. Whether or not you choose to receive this vaccine in pregnancy is your choice. It is my job to provide you with relevant information to assist you in making this decision. The two resources I have to offer are the CDC's recommendations and Evidence Based Birth. Research continues to indicate a good safety profile for this vaccine and underscores the benefits to the woman/pregnant person as well as the baby. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me to discuss your thoughts and concerns on this matter.

TELEMEDICINE

Peninsula Midwives will continue to offer the use of telemedicine alongside in-person care as appropriate for each individual. Televisits will be offered as office visit substitutes during periods of illness. All clients will be provided with a telemedicine informed consent at start of care.

CLINIC

- You are welcome to have whomever join you for your visits as long as they don't have symptoms of illness
- Masks are no longer required but encouraged in the clinic
- I request that if you have symptoms of illness you respect my and my family's health by testing for Covid, wearing a mask if negative and rescheduling or switching to a televisit if positive or symptoms are significant.
- Please reschedule or switch to a televisit under the following circumstances:
 - You test positive for Covid
 - You have had direct Covid exposure
 - You are freshly sick
 - You have upper respiratory symptoms and aren't interested in testing for Covid
- I thoroughly disinfect all equipment that touched the client after each visit
- I will continue masking during care. While I am veerrrry ready to stop masking and bring my whole face back, this is a step I need to keep taking to protect my more vulnerable family. I really appreciate your understanding.

BIRTH

- If you have any signs of viral infection and do not have a negative PCR Covid or negative antigen test, I will be recommending transfer to the hospital. There is enough evidence to suggest that mothers/birthers with active infections are at higher risk of complications during and immediately after birth as well as the fact that do not have the proper PPE to attend you at home safely. This is not a way in which I am willing to expose myself and my family.
 - This is one of the main reasons I continue to suggest that people consider limiting their exposure once they are in their "due window".
- Any members of your planned birth team with signs of illness (including your partner) cannot attend without a negative Covid test. If they have a negative test, they can attend but must wear a mask. If they are unwilling to test, I am not comfortable attending the birth.

Finally, as Covid continues to throw us for loops- please remember to do things that provide essential self-care: breathe, ground yourself to the Earth, get fresh air, listen to music that makes you feel good, go for walks in nature, sit at the beach, eat good food, dance, sing, do art, journal, connect with friends, take necessary breaks from social media and the news as needed, find a way to accept help when offered and seek professional mental support help if needed. Let me know if you'd like a list of resources. I am here for you and want to support you in any way I can.

Be well, in all the ways!

Your Midwife, Maya