



17 April 2020

Maternity Services at Northern Beaches Hospital

Dr GP,

We continue to provide maternity services for both public and private patients, however, there are some changes to ensure we are taking every precaution to keep mums, babies and families safe during the COVID-19 situation.

Routine Screening

There are new COVID-19 screening measures in place and mums, support people and visitors are asked screening questions prior to and on arrival to hospital.

If the support person is symptomatic they will be given a mask to wear and encouraged to present to the COVID-19 Clinic next to the Emergency Department for assessment. If they are symptomatic they are unable to be the support person and therefore mums should consider a backup, if that person is unwell.

Changes to Pregnancy Care Appointments

If mums have a hospital or clinic appointment, all attempts should be made to attend the appointment by themselves. We encourage them to video call partners into the appointment should they wish to be involved.

The schedule of appointments will most likely change depending on individual circumstances. Some planned face to face visits including the booking visit, will be made by telephone. Face to face appointments will be kept to a maximum of 15 minutes.

If mums have any concerns regarding their wellbeing or that of the baby, our birthing unit can be called day or night on 9105 5240.

Childbirth Education/Preparation for Parenthood

We have cancelled all face-to-face childbirth education classes until further notice. This measure is in keeping with social distancing guidelines which are in place to protect us all. There are a range of options available to mums through online platforms such as Nourish Baby.





Labour and Birth

Mums have the right to a safe and positive birth experience. Again, to keep everyone safe, we ask that mums choose one support person for their labour and birth. This might be a partner or Doula.

If mums have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection:

- they will be asked to wear a mask over their face and nose during labour
- they will still be able to move in labour and birth in the position of their choice
- they will have access to a range of pain relief options
- they may not have access to water birth
- they will be recommended to have continuous fetal heart rate monitoring in labour
- a paediatrician will discuss the care of baby post birth.

Feeding Baby

Skin-to-skin contact at birth and breastfeeding will continue to be encouraged. Mums should breastfeed with careful attention to hand hygiene as well as taking care not to cough or sneeze near baby.

If mums are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, they will be encouraged to wear a mask when feeding or expressing breast milk. Where possible, mums should have someone else help with the care of baby.

Visiting Restrictions in Place

For the protection of our women, babies and staff, restrictions have been placed on support persons and visitors.

Women will be able to bring one nominated person with them for support during their labour and birth. This is the only person that will be able to visit during your postnatal stay in hospital.

Visitors within our Special Care Nursery are being restricted to parents of the baby only.

For exceptional circumstances we encourage families to discuss their individual needs with staff. We know these restrictions can be challenging so we ask for understanding during this time.





Healthscope

After Birth – Midwifery Visits in the Home

If mum and your baby are well, going home as soon as possible after the birth is best and will be encouraged. To support mums, we will offer telephone support and home visits where needed.

Please email GP Liaison Nicola Pellegrini at nicola.pellegrini@healthscope.com.au if you have any specific questions or if you have suggestions for further GP updates.

Regards,

Dr Peter Thomas
Director Medical Services
Northern Beaches Hospital

