

Coronavirus and Pregnancy

South West and South Wales Network Information for Pregnant Women with Congenital Heart Disease

What effect does coronavirus have on pregnant women?

Generally, pregnant women do not appear to be more likely to be seriously unwell than other healthy adults if they develop the new coronavirus. It is expected that the large majority of pregnant women will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu like symptoms.

However the Chief Medical Officer advised that pregnant woman be placed in a vulnerable group on 16th March 2020. Caution has driven this decision because we know that some viral infections are worse in pregnant women. At the moment, there's no evidence that this is the case for coronavirus infection, but the amount of evidence available is still quite limited.

What should pregnant women do?

People in vulnerable groups are advised to be particularly careful to reduce social contact through social distancing measures.

Everyone should follow government guidance on social distancing, which can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

Antenatal Care

Women are advised to attend routine antenatal care unless they meet current self-isolation guidance for individuals and households of individuals with symptoms of new continuous cough or fever. They should remain in contact with their antenatal care provider during this time.

The number of visits, time within the hospital, and exposure to different staff members should be minimised.

Continued engagement with antenatal care, however provided, is crucial, particularly for women with mechanical heart valves.

What should pregnant women do if they develop symptoms of coronavirus?

Pregnant women should follow the guidance for everyone, i.e. to use the NHS 111 online service for information. If they develop more severe symptoms or their recovery is delayed, this may be a sign that they are developing a more significant chest infection that requires specialised care. In this case, they should contact their maternity care team or use the NHS 111 online service / NHS 24 for further information and advice.

Are any pregnant women with ACHD particularly at risk?

Extremely vulnerable individuals, who are at very high risk of severe illness, should have a 12 week period of shielding. This involves not leaving their homes, and within their homes minimising all non-essential contact with other members of the household. See link below for details:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/>

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients
2. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
3. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
4. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase their risk of infection.
5. People with chronic kidney disease

The British Congenital Cardiac Association (BCCA) has advised that the following ACHD patients should also be considered extremely high risk and be shielded:

https://www.bcca-uk.org/pages/news_box.asp?NewsID=19495710

- Fontan circulation
- Pulmonary arterial hypertension of any cause
- Cyanotic conditions ie saturation in air < 92%
- Patients with heart failure

The UK Maternal Cardiology Society (UKMCS) has further advised that the following patients should also be shielded if pregnant:

<https://mailchi.mp/bcs/bcs-newswire-799593?e=04c51bac7e>

- Impaired left ventricular function of any cause
- Systemic right ventricle, even if well-functioning
- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy with abnormal systolic or diastolic function and/or outflow tract obstruction
- Hypertensive heart disease with LVH
- Moderate or severe valvar (subvalvar/supravalvar) stenosis
- Severe valvar regurgitation (and moderate if symptomatic)
- Symptomatic coronary artery disease

Detailed information on coronavirus and pregnancy can be found at the Royal College of Obstetricians' website:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>