

2. Advice for health professionals to share with pregnant women

2.1 Travel advice for pregnant women

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the UK offers advice about travel safety that is regularly updated in line with the evolving situation. Pregnant women in the UK should follow the advice given by the FCO on the [UK Government website](#).⁶

All individuals, including pregnant women, should ensure that they have adequate insurance arrangements prior to travel. Finally, pregnant women should check that their travel insurance will provide cover for birth and care of a newborn baby if they give birth while abroad.

2.2 General advice for pregnant women who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19

Pregnant women concerned about exposure or symptoms indicating possible infection with COVID-19 in England, Wales or Northern Ireland should call NHS 111 or use the [NHS's 111 tool](#).⁶ In Scotland they should call their GP or NHS 24 (on 111) or visit [NHS Inform](#) for further advice. They should not visit their GP practice or attend A&E in person. If it is an emergency they should phone 999 and tell the operator of possible COVID-19 exposure.

Women returning from areas of the world which indicate a possible increased risk for coronavirus transmission ([list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#); [list for Scotland](#)) or who have been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 should phone NHS 111 or, if in Scotland, NHS 24 (on 111) or their GP.

Diagnostic swabs will be arranged if indicated, following advice from local Health Protection. Women with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should be advised to self-isolate until advised otherwise. Advice on self-isolation for mild confirmed cases is still being developed.

2.3 Advice regarding self-isolation for women with possible or confirmed

Pregnant women who have been advised to self-isolate should stay indoors and avoid contact with others for 14 days. Public Health England currently provides guidance for:

- [People who are advised to self-isolate](#)
- [People who live in the same accommodation as someone who is self-isolating](#)

For women who are advised to self-isolate, the guidance currently recommends to:

- Not go to school, work, NHS settings or public areas
- Not use public transport
- Stay at home and not allow visitors
- Ventilate the rooms where they are by opening a window
- Separate themselves from other members of their household as far as possible, using their own towels, crockery and utensils and eating at different times
- Use friends, family or delivery services to run errands, but advise them to leave items outside⁷

Women should be advised to contact their maternity care provider (e.g. midwife or antenatal clinic), to discuss attendance for routine antenatal appointments. See below for specific hospital guidance.

Pregnant women who are due to attend routine maternity appointments in the UK should contact their maternity care provider, to inform them that they are currently in self-isolation for possible/confirmed COVID-19, and request advice on attendance.

Pregnant women are advised not to attend maternity triage units or A&E unless in need of urgent obstetric or medical care. If women are concerned and require urgent medical advice, they are encouraged to call the maternity triage unit in the first instance. If attendance at the maternity unit or

hospital is advised, pregnant women are requested to travel by private transport and alert the maternity triage reception once on the premises, prior to entering the hospital.

2.4 Diagnosis of COVID-19

The process of COVID-19 diagnosis is changing rapidly. If diagnostic tests are advised, pregnant women should follow advice given, which should not be altered based on pregnancy status. In the UK, pregnant women should be investigated and diagnosed as per local / [Public Health England](#)⁸/[Health Protection Scotland](#)⁹ criteria. Obstetricians and midwives should liaise with their local virology service / health protection team for further details about arrangements for testing and notification reporting of a positive test result.

In the event of a pregnant woman attending with an obstetric emergency and being suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, maternity staff must first follow IPC guidance. This includes transferring to an isolation room and donning appropriate PPE. This can be time consuming and stressful for patients and health professionals. Once IPC measures are in place the obstetric emergency should be dealt with as the priority. Do not delay obstetric management in order to test for COVID-19.

Further care, in all cases, should continue as for a woman with confirmed COVID-19, until a negative test result is obtained.

3.3 Attendance for routine antenatal care in women with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Routine appointments for women with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 (growth scans, OGTT, antenatal community or secondary care appointments) should be delayed until after the recommended period of isolation. Advice to attend more urgent pre-arranged appointments (fetal medicine surveillance, high risk maternal secondary care) will require a senior decision on urgency and potential risks/benefits.

Trusts are advised to arrange local, robust communication pathways for senior maternity staff members to screen and coordinate appointments missed due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

If it is deemed that obstetric or midwifery care cannot be delayed until after the recommended period of isolation, infection prevention and control measures should be arranged locally to facilitate care. Pregnant women in isolation who need to attend should be contacted by a local care coordinator to re-book urgent appointments / scans, preferably at the end of the working day.

3.4 Attendance for unscheduled/urgent antenatal care in women with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Where possible, early pregnancy (EPU) or maternity triage units should provide advice over the phone. If this requires discussion with a senior member of staff who is not immediately available, a return telephone call should be arranged.