Discharge Information for Obstetric Patients with COVID-19

A quick-guide for obstetric patients being discharged from the hospital with diagnosed, or suspected, COVID-19.

COVID-19 Basics

You have been diagnosed with, or are suspected to have, a virus called COVID-19 or novel Coronavirus. This virus can cause fever, cough, chills, muscle aches, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea. Once you have COVID-19, it can take more than two weeks for symptoms to go away. Please drink plenty of water, get rest, and eat healthy during this time. People get COVID-19 by being in very close contact with an infected person. *Like adults, it is possible for infants to get COVID-19 after delivery by being exposed to droplets in the air from their mother or another infected person.*

What to do When You Get Home

After you get home, we recommend you:
- **Self-Isolate**: If possible, stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom from others in the house. We do not recommend bed rest; it is important for you to move around to prevent blood clots.
- **Stay Home**: Only leave your home to seek medical care. Avoid going to work, school, or public places. You should also avoid public transportation, ride sharing, or taxis if possible.
- **Protect Others:** If you must be around others, please wear a face mask. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you are unable to wash your hands, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Avoid sharing household items.

Caring for Your Baby

We don't have a lot of information about babies and children who are infected with COVID-19. If you are infected with COVID-19, or think you may be positive, here are some tips to help avoid spreading COVID-19 to your baby:
- Have a **healthy person provide all direct care** for the infant at home.
- If possible, **stay at least 6 feet away from your baby.** When it is not possible to stay separated from your baby, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and put on a face mask before caring for your baby.
- When you are feeling better and no longer have a fever, **discuss with your pediatrician and/or OB care provider** about when it is safe to stop the separation from your baby.

Breastfeeding

If you are able, breastfeed your baby. Breastmilk is considered the best nutrition for a newborn. We do not currently think that the virus can be transmitted through breastmilk, but you still might be able to transmit the virus to the baby when you are in close contact during nursing. Therefore, it is best to:
- Use a breast pump to **express milk and have a healthy caregiver feed the milk to the infant**. The person who feeds the baby should be wearing clean clothing and wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If they are unable to wash their hands, they should use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Thoroughly **wash your hands before pumping and sterilize the pump parts** after each pumping based on the manufacturer recommendations.
- If you are formula feeding, we recommend **someone else make formula and feed the baby** until the period of separation has ended. Please encourage all caregivers of the baby to wash hands frequently and seek care immediately if they become ill.

If your baby does develop symptoms, you may notice a stuffy nose or sneezing or coughing more often. If the baby develops trouble breathing or a fever higher than 38.0 degrees Celsius or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, you should call the baby's doctor right away. Make sure you let the doctor know that you have been diagnosed with, or are suspected to have, COVID-19. If your baby stops breathing, has blue lips or face, call 911 immediately.

Visiting Your Baby's Doctor

If you need to take your baby to the doctor's office for a check up or for any other concern, it is very important to let the doctor's office know that you have, or are suspected of having, COVID-19 *before going to the pediatrician's office*. If at all possible, a healthy caregiver should take the baby to the doctor and you should stay at home.

When to Call Your Doctor

Contact your OB/GYN or primary care office immediately if you feel your symptoms are getting worse. If you have a medical emergency and call 911, advise them you have, or might have, COVID-19. Emergency warning signs for COVID-19 include:

- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath;
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest;
- new confusion or difficulty arousing; and
- bluish lips or face.

Your provider may want to see you following the birth of your baby; call your doctor to schedule a follow-up if you did not schedule a visit before you left the hospital. For non-emergency visits, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19 *before* seeking care. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed. If you have any questions or concerns about COVID-19, please contact your doctor, or the hospital where you delivered your baby.

This was adapted from a document produced by Unity Point Health – Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa.