

# Covid-19 testing for Maternity Services

## Introduction

NHS England recommends that all women who need to stay in hospital for any reason either during pregnancy or labour including women returning to hospital after giving birth, should be tested for Covid-19, whether they are symptomatic or not. We support this recommendation and will offer you a swab for Covid-19 when you attend the Gloucestershire Hospitals Maternity Units to make sure that women and their families get the safest and most appropriate care.

This means we will offer testing to women:

- who are admitted to any ward (e.g. antenatal, postnatal).
- who are having a planned birth (induction of labour or planned caesarean section).

If you are having a planned caesarean section, you will be screened at your pre-op appointment when your bloods are taken.

## We are not currently offering the test to women attending:

- the Maternity Assessment Unit or Maternity Triage with non Covid-19 like symptoms and where admission is not required.
- for assessment of rupture of membranes (waters breaking) who are not being admitted unless induction of labour is planned in the next 48 hours.
- the Antenatal Clinic who have no symptoms of Covid-19.

We are also not currently offering the test to women who are planning a home birth.

Reference No.

GHPI1587\_07\_20

Department

**Maternity  
Services**

Review due

**July 2023**

## Patient Information

### Process on and during admission

Once your initial assessments and examinations have been completed and a decision is made that you require admission to hospital then a Covid-19 test will be offered, even if you do not have any symptoms.

The test involves a swab being taken from the back of your throat and nose. This is not painful or dangerous.

You can choose not to have the test if you wish.

It is helpful to know whether you have Covid-19, as this means:

- you will be able to advise your household members and other family or friends so they can make appropriate plans to self-isolate if necessary.
- if you show symptoms within a few days of having been tested you can be directed to the most appropriate department in the hospital for further care if necessary.
- if you have to stay in hospital after your result is known, and you are positive for the virus, we can make sure that you are cared for in a way that protects staff and other mothers and babies from picking up the virus.
- you can make an informed decision about the care you would like during pregnancy and the birth.

### Are there disadvantages to having a Covid-19 test?

A positive result may alter your birthplace choice. For example, if you tested positive within 1 week of going into labour and are planning on a natural birth in a midwifery led unit or at home, we would recommend that you give birth on the Delivery Suite at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital instead. This is because current guidance is that your baby's heart rate is monitored continuously during labour. We will however do all we can to make your birth experience as normal as possible.

A positive result would also mean that we may need to rebook some of your routine appointments if you are still pregnant or have recently given birth.

If you are booked for elective caesarean and your test is positive, **if it is safe to do so** we will move your booked caesarean date.

**Patient  
Information****When would I find out the result?**

Test results should normally be available within 12 hours. We are working towards having point of care testing which will mean results will be available earlier.

**How will I get the result?**

A midwife will call you to inform you of your result.

**What happens if I go home before the result is back?**

We will contact you with your result if it comes back after you go home whether it is negative or positive.

We know it is hard to wait, but as we are busy at the moment, we ask that you do not call us to ask for your result.

If the result is positive and you become unwell with Covid-19 related symptoms after discharge from the Maternity Unit you should contact NHS 111 in the first instance who may direct you for assessment at the hospital.

**How will my care change if I test positive and am still pregnant?**

If you test positive for Covid-19, your midwife or antenatal clinic team will be informed of your result. They will contact you if any changes are required to the care you receive. For example, if you have a routine antenatal appointment, this would need to be rebooked to when your period of self-isolation ends.

If you have a positive result, we would also offer a scan of your baby's growth and well-being 2 weeks after your self-isolation period ends.

**Patient  
Information**

## **What should I do if I test positive for Covid-19 and have recently given birth?**

If available, you will be given your results before you are discharged from hospital. If we receive your results when you have gone home with your baby, one of our midwives will contact you and discuss the next steps.

You will not be required to return to hospital if you and your baby remain well, except for your usual routine appointments. Your community midwife will be informed of your result and will contact you to discuss future postnatal appointments.

You will be prescribed and given a 10 day supply of a blood thinning injection called dalteparin and a pair of compression stockings (you may already have been prescribed this before going home). The reason for this is that pregnant women are already at an increased risk of blood clots and evidence suggests this risk is increased further with the Covid-19 infection.

You should continue to perform good hand hygiene. You may also be advised to wear a face mask when feeding your baby if you have symptoms of Covid-19. Your community midwife will discuss this with you.

You will have been given contact numbers prior to discharge. If you have any concerns about your or your baby's health you must contact us. In the event of an emergency please dial 999 and tell the operator that you have tested positive for Covid-19.

**We want to reassure you that our Maternity Services remain open 24 hours a day, and we urge you to contact us if you have any concerns at all during your pregnancy or following the birth of your baby.**

### **Contact information**

#### **Maternity Advice Line**

Tel: 0300 422 5541

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