



Dear South Shore Home Birth clients,

I am writing let you all know that I am monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely. I recently participated in a webinar produced by the CDC for health care providers caring for pregnant women as a part of ongoing efforts to limit or prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

There are only a few published reports on COVID-19 and pregnancy. However, the pregnant population may be at increased risk for infection due to unique physiological changes during pregnancy. These include reduced lung capacity, increased heart rate and oxygen consumption, and a subdued immune system.

Common clinical indications of infection include fever, cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath. Less common signs are sore throat, headache, cough with sputum, and nausea and diarrhea prior to onset.

Pneumonia is the most common complication of COVID-19 infection.

Pregnant women are considered an at-risk population and should focus on strategies for prevention. As you are giving birth at home, or have recently given birth, it is important that we stay diligent about contagion activity. However, your choice to have home birth care exponentially reduces risk as it is not necessary for you to enter a hospital or crowded medical office.

As we continue to work together to care for you and your infant, I suggest the following precautions and prevention strategies to minimize risk to your family, my own and my other clients:

- I ask that you let me know immediately if you come in contact with a person that is suspected or positive for having COVID-19.
- If you have any symptoms, please let me know and we will reschedule our in-person visit or schedule an online appointment.
- If you have any questions or concerns about illness, call me and we will make decisions together based on your symptoms.

- I will be rescheduling some appointments to a slightly different time as to allow time to disinfect the office between appointments and reduce time in the waiting room. If you receive a notification of appointment change and it does not work for you, please send me an email and we will find a time that works.
- I ask that you wash your hands upon entering the Wellness Center. We will have antibacterial soap available for you in the bathroom and the common kitchen area.
- I will be removing all toys from the prenatal room, so please bring some from home for your children to entertain them during our visits.
- Continue to take your prenatal vitamins. The amount of zinc and other nutrients in your prenatal vitamin should provide the core nutrients that also support immunity. While there's no harm in taking up to 30 mg zinc daily or up to 2000 mg of vitamin C daily, it's important not to exceed the dosage.
- Small studies have suggested that taking a daily probiotic could help prevent colds. Of course, that's not the same as COVID-19, and the evidence is weak – but it's not harmful to take a probiotic in pregnancy.
- Adequate Vitamin D levels, which can safely be achieved in most pregnant women by taking 2000 IU of Vitamin D3 daily, may also help support healthy immunity.
- Herbal medicines such as ginger and echinacea are considered safe during pregnancy, but should not be used in place of medication to reduce fever.
- Teas such as chamomile, lemon balm, and ginger can help with aches and pains, as well as some digestive symptoms.
- Babies will not catch COVID-19 in the womb, but can right after birth.
- COVID-19 has not been detected in amniotic fluid, the placenta, umbilical cord or breastmilk.
- Breastmilk from an active COVID-19 parent is safe to feed a newborn. Exclusive breast-pumping is recommended to avoid contact between the active COVID-19 birthing parent and the healthy newborn.
- If I become sick or suspect that I have come in contact with an infected person, backup midwives will step in for care.
- For postpartum parents, it's best to minimize visitors, and well-visits to the pediatrician. Be diligent on hand hygiene with siblings and immediate family.

I understand that these are scary times and it is really hard to make sense of the onslaught of information. Let's be smart and proactive, and work together.

In health,

Nicole