



whittington health maternity voices  
listening to parents:  
change through partnership

*Whittington Maternity Voices Partnership would like to thank all the dedicated professionals who are working so hard to look after expectant and new parents at this incredibly difficult time. Visit our website for more information [www.whittington.nhs.uk/maternity](http://www.whittington.nhs.uk/maternity)*

## **A message from Whittington Maternity Unit to all expectant and new parents**

**May 2020**

Dear all

We would like you to know that the Whittington is doing everything it can to support your choices at this very difficult period. We know how much it means to you to have the birth you were hoping for, and to have good, safe care at the times you need it.

You will be aware that the situation changes daily so we are constantly having to adapt. Some of our midwives and other health professionals who support you are in self-isolation, some are unwell themselves, and some are caring for family members. This means that we are working with fewer staff than usual, as well as having to make difficult decisions in order to protect you and our staff.

The maternity covid-19 hotline number is 07831 122 271

Open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday

Many of our retired midwives are volunteering to support you. We appreciate your choice to have your baby with us at this time. Please bear with us while we tackle this pandemic together.

With warm wishes from your Whittington Maternity Team.

This is the latest information that you need to be aware of.

- All health workers are now wearing gloves, aprons and masks when caring for you. This is so we can keep you and NHS staff safe.
- For antenatal appointments please **come on your own**, unless it is absolutely necessary to bring someone else with you
- Please use the **labour ward entrance only** when attending for appointments
- Tell us if you develop COVID symptoms. It won't affect the quality of the care you receive but it will ensure that those looking after you, and people around you, can be protected

### **During pregnancy and coronavirus**

Pregnant women have been put on the vulnerable list principally as a precaution and that is why government advice about social distancing has been recommended.

We want to limit the number of times you need to travel to see us, whilst still giving you the best possible care.

**You can self-refer for your pregnancy** online from 6 weeks of pregnancy.

If you have an **appointment with a doctor** at the hospital, they will contact you over the phone, give you advice and decide whether you need to come in.

**If you feel unwell or your baby's movement is reduced**, please attend the maternity assessment unit to be seen. Please do not stay at home as you may need to have urgent care.

- **Booking** by a midwife will be done on the phone with your **consent**. If we feel that a face to face booking is necessary we will arrange that.
- **Your dating scan (11plus weeks) and bloods** appointment will be face to face in one session. At the moment, we ask partners not to attend scan appointments.
- **At 16 weeks** you will be contacted to see how you are and your blood tests results reviewed.
- **At 20 weeks** you will have your anomaly scan and any other tests etc that you need to have. At the moment, we ask partners not to attend scan appointments.
- **From 28 weeks** you will have an appointment every 3 weeks as normal. They will be face to face with a midwife. Some community hubs are still open and we will do our best to keep them open. We ask that mothers attend these appointments alone.
- At **36 weeks** discuss birth preferences/ options with your midwife
- All antenatal classes have been stopped temporarily, but you can access information for labour preparation on these links:

[www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/labour-birth/stages-labour](http://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/labour-birth/stages-labour)

[www.nhs.uk/apps-library/baby-buddy/](http://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/baby-buddy/)

For breast feeding - free course online:

[www.courses.abm.support/courses/team-baby-getting-ready-to-breastfeed/](http://www.courses.abm.support/courses/team-baby-getting-ready-to-breastfeed/)

Information about coronavirus, pregnancy, birth and beyond:

[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk) and search 'coronavirus'

For VBAC (vaginal birth after a caesarean birth) see video on YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsF-4rJv\\_i0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsF-4rJv_i0)

**Always contact us if you have any concerns about yourself or your baby – such as reduced movements or bleeding**

**Maternity assessment unit: 020 7288 5880**

### **Giving Birth**

We want to support you in your choice of birth place, but we cannot always promise to do so. Your safety is our priority. Please remember that you can 'personalise' your space, wherever you give birth.

### **Birth Partners**

- You are welcome to **bring one partner without swapping at any time**, if you are in hospital for care and treatment.
- Your partner can stay overnight on the postnatal ward.

This arrangement will be kept under review and may be subject to change as the Covid-19 pandemic develops.

**Your partner or supporter needs to be well to accompany you. They will be asked to leave if they are showing symptoms of Covid-19. Try to have someone else as a back-up in case your partner/supporter is ill.**

### **Induction**

- Your birth partner or supporter can be with you for induction.

This arrangement will be kept under review and may be subject to change as the Covid-19 pandemic develops.

## **The Birth Centre**

We aim to keep the Birth Centre open as much as possible and review on a daily basis. If there are not enough staff to provide care we will close it.

## **Home birth- restricted**

We are pleased to announce that our homebirth service is back. For the time being however we will honour women **already booked for a homebirth** with us. We will not be able to accept late requests, or transfers for homebirths as we are trying to provide a safe level of care with the number of staff we have.

## **Use of water during labour and water birth**

You can use water for pain relief and the first stage of labour. We request that you leave the pool for the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of labour (the birth of your baby). We will keep this under review as more evidence emerges.

## **Planned caesareans**

- We will carry out all planned caesareans, both for medical need and maternal request.
- We might have to change the planned date and /or venue of your caesarean, if it is safe to do so.

## **Postnatal**

- **We will phone you** before we visit you the first time.
- **The day after you go home** we will visit you at home.
- **5 days after your baby's birth** we will visit you at home. This visit will include the heel prick test (blood spot check) for your baby.
- **8 days after your baby's birth** we will check in with you by phone to see how you are.
- **Around days 10-12** you will receive a phone call and a visit arranged if required.
- Midwives will decide when to transfer your care to health visiting services, depending on you and your baby's health. They may also refer you to other services for further help and support.
- Health visiting and breastfeeding support services will contact you by phone and inform you on how to access their support after you have had your baby.

**If you need to speak with a midwife call: 0207 288 3482 (Community Base)**