

Expansion of Coronavirus (Covid-19) testing to pregnant women coming into hospital during pregnancy or to give birth, and women returning to hospital after they have given birth

NHS England has decided that women who need to stay overnight for any reason either during pregnancy or labour and women returning to hospital will be tested for Covid-19.

Those who are eligible for testing:

- All pregnant women admitted to hospital for an inpatient stay (antenatal admissions)
- All women at term with pre labour rupture of membranes.
- All women at term assessed as early labour and either admitted to early labour lounge or sent home to await events.
- All women admitted in labour
- All women admitted for induction of labour
- All women having a planned Caesarean birth (CS)*
- All women readmitted to hospital after giving birth (postnatal readmissions)

*All women for elective CS should be swabbed a maximum of 72 hours prior to the day of their CS.

You should be re-screened if you are not admitted within 48 hours of the first COVID swab being taken.

Process on and during admission

1. Once all your initial assessments and examinations have been completed and a decision is made that you require ongoing care by being admitted to the hospital, then a Covid-19 test will be offered, even if you do not have any symptoms of Covid-19.
2. The test involves a swab being taken from the back of your throat and nose. It is not painful or dangerous however you can choose not to have it done
3. It is helpful if we do know you have Covid-19, and it means that we can ensure that:
 - a. 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.

- b. 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.
 - c. if your maternity admission is prolonged beyond the result being known, if you are positive for the virus we can ensure that you are cared for in a way that protects staff and other mothers and babies from picking up the virus.
4. Test results should normally be available within 48 hours.
 - 5. If you have a positive Covid-19 test result this may affect some of your birth choices, e.g. water birth will not be allowed, and could result in brief delays in some care aspects while staff put on personal protective equipment (PPE) and plan your care. However, we will do all we can to make your birth experience as normal possible.**
 6. If your admission test was negative and your stay in hospital lasts 5 days or more, you will be tested again.

After discharge

- We will contact you if the result comes back after you go home whether it is negative or positive. We know waiting may make you very anxious, but as we are so busy at the moment, we would ask you not to call asking for your results.
- If the test is positive and you become unwell after discharge from the Maternity Unit, you should contact NHS 111 in the first instance, who may direct you for assessment at the hospital. If you are coming back to the RBH, you should go to the Emergency Department (A&E), not to the Maternity Unit.
- Once the Emergency Team has assessed you, if input from the Maternity Team is required this will be requested by the Emergency Team, and maternity staff will visit you wearing the appropriate protective equipment.

Contact us

If you have any queries, please contact the Community Midwifery Team on the numbers given on your notes. Alternatively, call the Midwifery Triage line on 0118 322 7304.

More information is available on the Trust website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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