



### **IS IT SAFE FOR ME IN HOSPITAL?**

We have had to make changes to our visiting policy in an effort to respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic. This has been done to protect you, your family, the staff and all other women and babies within the unit. We have created separate areas within the unit to be able to safely care for those who have tested positive to COVID and those who we suspect have COVID. This ensures that those women and their babies who are unaffected are also kept safe and well. We are also following government guidelines in order to safeguard you and the wider public.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GO INTO HOSPITAL?**

If you go into labour, rupture your membranes, develop any bleeding, abdominal pain or have any concerns regarding your baby please contact the midwifery team for advice before you attend the unit. The telephone numbers are on the back of the leaflet.

It is important that we know that you are coming to the hospital so that we can make preparations to receive you before you arrive.

If you have COVID symptoms:

- High temperature anything above 37.8
- A new continuous cough for more than an hour or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- Or any other symptoms you feel that may be related to COVID please contact 111

If you are **admitted** into the unit you will be given a COVID test. This is to ensure we are keeping you, your baby and our staff as safe as possible. This will help us to contain and reduce the spread of the virus. If we know you have or do not have COVID this will allow us with you to plan your care.

### **AM I MORE AT RISK OF BECOMING UNWELL IF I AM PREGNANT?**

There is currently no clear evidence to suggest that pregnant women are at a greater risk from COVID than any other healthy individual or that you will pass the infection on to your unborn baby. However this is all very new to us and we are learning more all the time about how the virus affects pregnancy. We therefore would advise pregnant women to be cautious and to minimise the risk of catching the virus. Follow government guidelines stay alert and keep safe.

Towards the end of pregnancy 36-37 weeks we would advise you to isolate as much as possible but you must try and stay active. Keep hydrated and take a healthy well balanced diet.

### **CAN I HAVE MY PARTNER AT APPOINTMENTS?**

The antenatal schedule of appointments will continue with some minor adjustments. Some appointments will be by telephone consultation. At the present time the appointments are only for you. Partners, children, friends and relatives are asked not to attend and this applies to all appointments.

### **WHO CAN VISIT ME IF I AM ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL?**

On rare occasions, you may need to stay in hospital for care during your pregnancy. At the current time no visitors are allowed into the unit unless you are in labour.

### **LABOUR AND BIRTH YOUR PARTNER /SUPPORT PERSON**

If you are admitted in labour we will perform a COVID test for you on admission. Your partner will also be tested but will be asked to leave the unit and isolate until the swab results are available. This will take about 1-2 hours.

If negative your partner will be able to return and be with you in labour. Your partner must have no current symptoms or within the last 10 days to be allowed to access the unit. They must wear a face mask at all times. They will have to remain in the room with you at all times. Please bring everything that you require for labour including drinks and snacks for both you and your partner. If your partner is living in a household with someone who has had coronavirus they need to have self-isolated for 10 days and have had a negative test at the end of

their isolation period to be allowed in to the unit as per government guidance. If at any time your partner becomes unwell and displays any COVID symptoms they will be asked to leave the unit.

If upon testing your birthing partner COVID is detected, they will not be invited back into the unit. However, you may elect to bring an alternative support person but the same conditions for entry into the unit will be applied.

### **IF YOU ARE COVID POSITIVE**

If you are COVID positive and your partner or support person is a contact from the same household, they must contact 111 and return home to self-isolate as per government guidance.

If you are aware that you are COVID positive and in labour please telephone the unit before you arrive. Report to the security in reception of St Bernard's hospital and they will escort you to the ward. If you are positive and in early labour and admitted to the unit a plan for your labour and delivery will be discussed with you by the Consultant Obstetrician.

### **PLANNED PROCEDURES INDUCTION OF LABOUR**

If you have a planned procedure booked such as an induction of labour a test will be booked for you and your partner via the drive in 48 hours before admission following this, you will both be asked to return home to self-isolate until admission.

If your partner is negative, they will be asked to stay at home until you are in established labour and in the labour room before they will be admitted into the ward. They will be permitted to stay with you until you are transferred to the postnatal bay approximately 2 hours after delivery. If positive they will have to self-isolate and follow government guidelines.

### **ELECTIVE CAESAREAN SECTION**

If you are having an elective caesarean section, you and your partner will also have a booked COVID test 48 hours prior to admission via the drive through and you will both have to self-isolate until admission. Your partner if negative will be able to accompany you to theatre and stay with you for approximately 2 hours following delivery they will be asked to leave the unit when you are transferred to the postnatal bay. They will not be able to return to the unit and on your discharge from the ward they will be able if negative to return to the hospital reception to collect you and your baby. You and your baby will be

escorted to the front entrance of the hospital by the discharging midwife or hospital attendant.

If all is well after your delivery, we would hope that your stay as an in-patient will not be lengthy and we will be promoting shorter stays and early discharges if it is safe to do so.

### **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

if you arrive in Maternity and your case is one of an emergency our priority is to you and your baby. Regrettably your partner / support person will not have access to the unit without a negative test.

Following this acute event, if your birthing partner is negative we may allow them access to the ward to visit you and your baby.

We are acutely aware of the emotional impact that not allowing partners /support persons into the unit may have and we want to work with you to maintain a safe option for you and your family during this national crisis. We cannot stress enough that this is a protective measure for you your family and the staff who care for you.

If our midwives get sick and have to isolate they also have to stay at home and the staff want to be able to care for you in the best and most humane way as possible. We hope that you understand the reasoning behind us having to enforce this process and we will pledge to support your birth process during this pandemic.

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact the unit on the telephone numbers set out below.



**INFORMATION FOR WOMEN AND THEIR  
FAMILIES**

**MATERNITY UNIT  
ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL**

Maternity Unit  
St Bernard's Hospital  
Europort Road  
Gibraltar  
200 72266 ext. 2124 / 2126

**VISITING IN MATERNITY UNIT DURING THE PANDEMIC**