

## Covid-19 Update

In response to the increased cases of Covid 19 in our community, Whitehorse General Hospital has introduced new visitor restrictions to limit the spread of the virus. Most admitted patients in the hospital are no longer allowed to have any visitors. However, it is very important for a woman to have a trusted support person in labour if she chooses, and the Maternity ward is one of the only places in the hospital that will continue to permit visitors. Visitors may not attend routine booked assessments on the Maternity ward (i.e. non-stress tests). Patients are limited to one support person in labour. Your support person will be supplied a meal tray from the cafeteria.

It is very important that your support person is not at increased risk of Covid 19 exposure. This includes anyone with symptoms of Covid 19, as well as any close contact with a person known or suspected to have Covid, or has been asked by Public Health to isolate or monitor for symptoms in the last 14 days. A support person who screens positive for these risk factors will be asked not to enter the hospital. Recognizing that many of the new cases are young children, and that new contacts are being identified daily through schools, daycares and other group activities, it is important for families to limit their social contacts, especially if your due date is less than a month away. It is also good to plan a backup support person, just in case your support person is unexpectedly identified as a high risk Covid 19 contact, or develops symptoms of Covid 19.

In addition, all maternity patients will be tested for Covid 19 using rapid testing technology once they are admitted to hospital.

Please remember that any woman who requires hospital care for any reason at any time in her pregnancy will never be turned away because of Covid 19 symptoms or contacts, but it is important to let your care providers know so we can use appropriate safety equipment to protect staff. Research now shows that women who become infected with Covid 19 in pregnancy have a higher chance of complications than when not pregnant, and it is important to avoid close contact with anyone who may be symptomatic, or at risk of Covid 19 exposure. The Covid 19 vaccine greatly decreases the chance of getting the virus, or of developing complications if infected. We encourage all patients to consider getting vaccinated for Covid 19 in pregnancy, and to ask any questions around vaccination at your next prenatal appointment.