What is Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new virus. It is very different from the common cold. It often affects people's lungs. There is no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 right now.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms can range from mild to severe. The most common symptoms are:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Less common symptoms are:
- Fatigue (tired for a long time)
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea (upset stomach)
- Diarrhea

Am I more at risk of getting COVID-19 if I am pregnant?

Because COVID-19 is new, we do not know a lot yet about pregnant women who get the virus. So far, we have not seen higher numbers in pregnant women. Pregnancy does affect your immune system. This can make it harder for your body to fight a virus. Pregnancy can also increase your risk of getting a respiratory (lung) virus of any kind. This means if you get COVID-19, you may be at higher risk for severe illness than someone who is not pregnant. This has been the case for other viruses like SARS and the flu.

Can COVID-19 affect my pregnancy?

COVID-19 is still very new. So, we do not have a lot information about how it can affect your pregnancy. In other coronaviruses (SARS and MERS), there was not an increased risk of miscarriage or stillbirth. But, we have seen increased risk with similar illnesses:
- In women who had the flu during pregnancy, we have seen more women having low-birthweight babies or having their babies early.
- In women who had a high fever in the first trimester, we have seen higher rates of some birth defects.

Can I give the virus to my baby during pregnancy or delivery?

Again, we do not know a lot yet. There have been a few mothers with COVID-19 who have had babies. We have not yet seen the virus in the amniotic fluid (the fluid your unborn baby lives in inside your uterus). A very small number of the babies born to mothers with COVID-19 have had the virus, but we do not yet know if they were infected before, during, or immediately after birth. In past coronaviruses, like SARS and MERS, mothers with the disease did not pass it to their babies during pregnancy or birth.

We have seen cases of young babies with COVID-19. These babies could have gotten the virus from contact with their mother after birth. We have not found COVID-19 in breast milk.

Is it safe for me to have my baby at a hospital that is treating COVID-19 patients?

Yes, you should be able to have your baby at the hospital you planned on without any extra risk for you or your baby. Hospitals are doing all they can to keep patients and staff safe. If they know or suspect a patient has COVID-19, they are keeping those patients and their assigned staff separated from other patients and staff.

Hospitals also have strict limits on visitors, to cut down on the spread of the virus. It is very important that you follow these limits on visitors. Make arrangements now to use your p hone to talk to and share video with your friends and family.

We do not recommend that you deliver your baby at home.

I work in health care or another place where the risk of getting COVID-19 is high. Should I keep working until the baby is born?

Health care employers should be taking extra steps to cut down on COVID-19 risk in pregnant employees. If you are not sure what your employer is doing to limit your risk, ask. Visit the CDC web site to learn about its guidelines for health care and other employers: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Will the hospital separate me from my baby and keep the baby in quarantine?

If you do not have COVID-19 and have not been exposed to it, the hospital will not quarantine your baby or keep you apart because of the virus.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or if you have been exposed, we will separate you from your baby. This follows guidance of the CDC, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. We do this to reduce the risk of your baby getting COVID-19. We will keep you apart from your baby until you are no longer at risk of giving them the virus. We know how hard it is for you to be apart from your baby. But, it is the best thing we can do to keep your baby healthy. If you must be separated from your baby, talk to people who can help you with a plan for who will take care of your baby. Your family, your doctor, and the hospital can all help.

How can I protect myself from getting COVID-19?

Avoid close contact with other people

The virus is spread mainly from person to person between people who are in close contact (about 6 feet). It spread by respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the droplets land on people nearby or are breathed into the lungs.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Try to keep 6 feet of distance between yourself and other people.
- Stay home when possible and do not make unnecessary trips to the store or other places.

Wash your hands

- Wash often. Wash after you have been in a public place. Wash after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Use soap and water. If you do not have soap and water, use a hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol. If you use sanitizer, rub your hands together until they feel dry.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds. Wash all of the surfaces of both hands.

Stay home if you are sick

If you are sick, please stay home unless you need to get medical care. If you have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your provider's office or hospital first. They may have special instructions for you, so they can protect you and other patients.

Cover and clean when you cough or sneeze

- Cover your mouth and nose by coughing or sneezing into the inside of your elbow (not your hand), or cover with a tissue.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands right away with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after you cough or sneeze.

Clean and disinfect

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces each day. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

Should I wear a facemask?

- **If you are sick:**
    - Avoid contact with other people.
    - Put on a mask before you go into your provider's office or into the hospital.

- **If you are NOT sick:**
    - You do not need to wear a mask unless you are taking care of someone who is sick and they are not able to wear a facemask. There may be a shortage of masks, and they should be saved for health care providers and caregivers of sick people at home.

What is social distancing and why is it important?

Social distancing is the best tool we have to slow the spread of COVID-19 right now. Social distancing is physical distancing. Separating ourselves physically from other people can decrease the spread of the virus. This is necessary so we can decrease the need to put a lot of patients in the hospital at one time. Instead of a "surge" of patients all at one time, the cases will be over several weeks or months and allow our health care system to give each patient the best care possible.

Who should I contact if I am concerned that I have symptoms?

You can contact your OB provider if you are concerned that you have symptoms of COVID-19. If you come to your provider's office or to the hospital, please call before you arrive so that we can be ready to take care of you.

Or you can use the options below:

1. **UAMS Health COVID-19 Hotline**   (800) 632-4502

2. **COVID-19 screening online through telehealth option**:   https://uamshealth.com/healthnow/

3. **UAMS COVID-19 drive-thru screening option:**

UAMS has a drive-thru area for quick COVID-19 screening. You may use the drive-thru if you have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath). The drive-thru is at the corner of Shuffield Drive and Jack Stephens Drive on the main UAMS campus in Little Rock. It is open every day from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m.

When you arrive at the drive-thru screening, follow these steps:
1. Turn off your car engine.
2. Stay inside your car.
3. Look for the phone number to call.
4. Call the registration phone number. They will get you registered and start your screening.

Please note: Screening is different than testing. Screening tells the health care team who needs to be tested. We can only test certain people at this time. This is because of limited test supplies. This is a problem across the country. After our staff screen you, they will decide if you need a test for COVID-19 or other illnesses. If your screening shows that you do not need testing at this time, we will send you home. We will call to check on you later.

Links and Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

UAMS Coronavirus Information
https://uamshealth.com/coronavirus/