

Patient information

Expansion of 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

Introduction

NHS England has recommended that women who need to stay overnight in hospital for any reason either during pregnancy or labour, and women returning to hospital after giving birth, should all be tested for Covid 19.

Why would I need this test?

This procedure is to ensure the safety of you, your baby and family and to make sure you are cared for in the correct environment.

Who are the people who will be having this procedure?

- All antenatal admissions for inpatient stay
- All women at term with pre labour rupture of membranes.
- All women at term assessed as early labour and either admitted to Murray Ward or sent home to await events.
- All women admitted in labour
- All women admitted for induction of labour
- All women having a planned elective Caesarean Section will be swabbed on the day of their Caesarean Section
- All postnatal readmissions

What are the alternatives?

You have the right to decline the test, the midwife will document this in your maternity notes.

What does the test involve?

Once all your initial assessments and examinations have been completed and a decision is made that you require ongoing care by being admitted to stay overnight in hospital, then a Covid 19 test will be offered, even if you do not have any symptoms of Covid 19.

The test involves a swab being taken from the back of your throat and nose, and is not painful or dangerous, but you can choose not to have the test if you wish.

Test results should normally be available within 24 -48 hours.

If you have Covid 19 symptoms and are awaiting a test result this may affect some of your birth choices e.g. you will be unable to have a water birth, there could be brief delays in some care aspects whilst 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 as possible.

What are the expected benefits of testing?

It is helpful if we do know whether you have Covid 19, and means we can ensure that:

- 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
- 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
- if your maternity admission is prolonged beyond the result being known, then 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.

What should I do when I go home?

If you are discharged before your result is known a Midwife will contact you if the result is positive, and advise you accordingly.

Consent

Prior to performing the swab test, staff will discuss the the process for obtaining the swab. You will need to give you consent for the swab test to be taken

Sources of information

For further information see:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 734731 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4500 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Members of the Women and Children's guideline Implementation Group

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Women and children's

Next review date: July 2023

Responsible clinician/author: Sarah Woodward, Deputy Head of Midwifery
Pamela Clifton, Better Births Project Lead

© East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust - www.esht.nhs.uk