

COVID-19 Resources for Snohomish County pregnant and postpartum families and their caregivers

A message from Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce of Snohomish County

The COVID-19 pandemic is a source of stress, anxiety, and fear – especially when misinformation is circulating.

This stress, combined with social isolation, can trigger the onset of new or worsening mental health symptoms including acute stress reactions, anxiety, depression, or mood changes. Expecting parents are especially vulnerable to mood and anxiety disorders.

The pregnancy and postpartum (perinatal) periods are very important and challenging at the best of times. Social isolation, although necessary to slow the spread of the disease, can put parents at greater risk for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs).

Approximately [1 in 7 women experience mental health conditions during pregnancy and after giving birth, and 1 in 10 men experience mental health conditions during their partner's pregnancy and after.](#)

You're not alone. There is help. PMADs are temporary and treatable.

Although pregnancy has not been demonstrated to be a risk factor for more severe illness from COVID-19, the impact of [toxic stress](#) on a growing family can be profound and long-lasting. Toxic stress is a chronic hyperactivation of the sympathetic nervous system (the fight-or-flight response), which overwhelms a person's ability to cope. The effects of toxic stress are especially potent in children because of their growing bodies. Toxic stress is disruptive and damaging to a child's growth and development.

We also recognize that buffers can lessen the impact of toxic stress. Buffers can include: a stable and nurturing adult who is there for a child; having enough healthy food; having safe housing; access to reliable information from a trusted provider; and a supportive community for parents.

These buffers help ensure healthy development for young children. They also help improve the health of parents so they are better able to care for their family and ensure a safe, stable, and nurturing environment for their children so they can thrive into adulthood. Preventing mental health issues and acting on symptoms early can make a big difference in a family's wellbeing.

In this message, we want to communicate reliable information and current resources for families and caregivers related to childbirth, early postpartum care, and PMADs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For pregnant or postpartum (perinatal) people and their partners

Pregnancy and risk of COVID-19

- Pregnancy has not been demonstrated to be a risk factor for more severe illness from COVID-19. Other viral respiratory infections like influenza or other coronaviruses (including SARS and MERS) have been associated with a higher frequency of serious complications in pregnant women.
- A high fever in the first trimester *can* lead to birth defects. However, the risk to the mother and fetus during pregnancy and COVID-19 is unknown because there are very few confirmed cases in pregnancy.
- Due to changes in the body, pregnant people can be more prone to some infections.
- To date, no cases have been reported of a COVID19-positive mother passing the disease to her newborn via childbirth.
 - The virus has not been detected in amniotic fluid or breastmilk.
- It is imperative that pregnant people take care to prevent getting sick.
 - Stay at home except for medical appointments.
 - Many prenatal visits can be done over the phone or over video calls (tele-health).
 - Ask your partner, a neighbor or a friend to pick up groceries for you. Or get groceries delivered.
 - If you need to go out, keep your distance. Stay six feet away from people.
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. An alcohol-based sanitizer, 60% alcohol, can be used if soap and water is not readily available.
 - Avoid touching your face, and cough and sneeze into a tissue or elbow.

Newborns and risk of COVID-19

- The risk of COVID-19 to newborns is unknown because there are very few confirmed cases.
- Of the cases of newborns with COVID-19, the illness was generally mild. However, rare cases of severe illness or even death in COVID-19 infected infants have been reported.
- Newborns can contract COVID-19 through close contact. If you are sick with COVID-19, wear a cloth face cover, and wash your hands before feeding or caring for the baby. Another option to consider is arranging for someone else to care for your baby until you are released from isolation.

For the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 in children and during pregnancy [see the CDC guidelines](#).

Considerations for prenatal care and childbirth

If you are a low-risk pregnancy, consider whether having a home birth or giving birth at a community-based birth center would be right for you:

- There are licensed midwives who are available.
- Talk to your primary care provider or contact a licensed midwife near you for an assessment of whether this is a good option for you.
- The following is a list of local community-based midwives.
 - [Bayside Birth](#)
 - [Cedar Grove Midwives](#)
 - [Cascade Birth Center](#)
 - [Seattle Midwives](#)
 - [The Special Delivery Company](#)
 - [Moonrise Health](#)
 - [Sprout Birth Center](#) (birth center only)
 - [Origins Natural Health and Midwifery](#)
 - [Northshore Midwives and Lactation Consulting](#)
 - [Snohomish Midwives](#)
 - [Puget Sound Birth Center](#)
 - [Mount Vernon Birth Center](#)
- You can find a directory of community-based midwives (birth center and home birth) through the [WA State Midwives' Association](#).

If you have symptoms for COVID-19, please talk to your health care provider about getting tested. Symptoms include cough, fever, sore throat, and/or difficulty breathing.

- COVID-19 testing is now more widely available through your provider.
- More testing resources and information about COVID-19 in Snohomish County can be found on the [Snohomish Health District website](#).
- If you test positive for COVID-19, please talk to your health care provider on next steps. In general:
 - Delivery would occur at the hospital.
 - If you are already established with a community-based midwife, then prenatal care can continue via tele-health.
 - In addition to your partner, you would be allowed one support person.
 - This can be a family member, friend, or professional doula.
 - If you do not have a support person for your childbirth:
 - You can find an affordable doulas at [Doula Match](#).
 - Postpartum doulas are also available. Contact [NAPS](#).
 - Providence Pavilion for Women and Children Visitor Guidelines: **Antepartum** (prenatal) **patients** are permitted one visitor. Must remain in the patient's room. Must be 18 years or older.

Labor patients are permitted one partner and one labor support person (must be 18 years or older). Must remain in the patient's room. Once patient has delivered and completed recovery the labor support person must leave.

Postpartum patients are only allowed their one partner who must remain in the patient's room.

A NICU patient is permitted the mother and one other person. All labor support persons and visitors must be 18 years or older. The partner may be younger than 18 years of age.

- You can decline to be separated from your newborn.
 - The CDC lays out a thoughtful framework for decision-making about mother-baby contact when the mother is known to have COVID-19. [The WHO encourages early and close contact with baby and exclusive breastfeeding.](#)

Extra professional support during the perinatal period for low-income people:

- [Nurse Family Partnership \(ChildStrive\)](#). Personal nurse for first time mothers. Enroll by 28 weeks of pregnancy to receive support during pregnancy and for two years postpartum. Nurses bring information about health, nutrition, and wellness in addition to parenting, and emotional adjustment to parenthood. 425-245-8377.
- [Parents As Teachers \(Child Strive\)](#). For underserved parents and foster parents of children in utero through kindergarten entry. Build your resilience, and experience the rewards of being your child's first and most important teacher. 425-245-8377.
- Maternity Support Services (MSS) and Infant Case Management (ICM).
 - Preventive health and education services to help an individual have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. MSS is offered through the First Steps Program if they are pregnant and receiving Apple Health.
 - In Snohomish County MSS is offered through Sea Mar and Step By Step.
 - [Sea Mar MSS](#)
 - [Step By Step MSS](#)

Social connection

It takes a village to raise a family. Even though we are physically distancing ourselves, there are ways to find social-emotional support with other pregnant and parenting families.

- Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS): 206-547-8570. Social support groups to new parents, groups meet for 2 hours for 12 consecutive weeks. Now meeting

on virtual platforms. Sliding scale pricing available to all participants, no income verification needed. www.peps.org

- A supportive community group on [Facebook for Puget Sound pregnant and postpartum people and birth professionals who support them during COVID-19](#)

Getting help for PMADs

If you think you might need help with your mood and anxiety, but are unsure of where to go. [Contact Perinatal Support of Washington \(PS-WA\) for how to contact their Warm Line, a list of resources, including tele-mental health providers, and support groups](#)

- [PS-WA Warm Line](#): 1-888-404-7763 or email info@perinatalsupport.org
 - Dads can request to speak to a dad.
- We know there are few community resources that are for dads. Here's another resource, available online via Facebook Live, from the Center for Men's Excellence – [Basic Training for New Dads](#).
- [Compass Health](#): 425-349-8200. Compass is the main provider for Medicaid in our County, offering individual and group psychotherapy for men and women with mental health and adjustment issues, including postpartum mental health.
- Suicide is one of the leading causes of maternal death within the first year after giving birth. If you are thinking about suicide, call the 24/7 Crisis Care Line (425) 388-7215, or go to <http://www.imhurting.org/> to get help now.
- [Providence Behavioral Health Urgent Care](#): 425-261-4210

Substance and Opioid Use Disorder

If you are struggling with a substance use disorder there is help, you can contact:

- [Parent Child Assistance Program \(PCAP\)](#)
- [Therapeutic Health Services \(THS\)](#)
- [Ideal Option](#)
- [Community Health Centers of Snohomish County](#) has obstetric care and comprehensive behavioral health services including Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT).
- [Homeward House](#)
- [Recovery Café](#)

Additional county information related to opioid use disorder can be found at [Snohomish Overdose Prevention](#).

Basic Needs

For many other resources including food, housing, financial, and other assistance please check the [Snohomish County Health and Human Services Resource Guide](#).

- For breastfeeding help you can go to WIC, ParentHelp123, [Kelly Mom](#) or see the [Snohomish County Breastfeeding Coalitions's resource list](#).
- For diapers and formula, contact your local food bank.

For caregivers and providers

- Caring for someone at home with COVID19 – [CDC guidelines](#)
- CDC Webinar & slides, March 12: [COVID19 update for health care professionals caring for children and pregnant women](#)
- WHO: Clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when COVID19 is suspected – [section 13 addresses caring for infants and mothers with COVID19 and breastfeeding](#).
- [Perinatal Psychiatric Consultation Line for Providers, partnership access line \(PAL\) for providers](#)
- [PMAD Resources for Professionals](#)
- [Midwives Association of WA COVID19 Resources](#)
- [COVID19 and Doulas – International Recommendations](#)
- [Pandemic Trained Birth Doula Directory](#)

This message was prepared by Felicia Cain, MSN, RN, Public Health Nurse with guidance from the Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce. The Taskforce is supported by the [NEAR Collaborative](#).