



Frequently Asked Questions

Here you will find answers to your questions about your pregnancy, birth and postnatal care during the **Coronavirus pandemic.**

Correct as of 1st May 2020—guidance is being reviewed every day so please monitor our Facebook pages where we will post any changes

We understand that having a baby during these uncertain times is worrying and you may be scared about what will happen. We want to try and reassure you that we are doing all we can to ensure the safety of you and your families. In order to do this, we are having to make some difficult decisions that affect the services we provide. Please know that we make these decisions with your best interests in mind, whilst also considering the safety of you, your families and our staff. We are constantly reviewing our guidance and are trying to ensure that changes are communicated to you quickly and efficiently. As always, if you are ever unsure you can call the hospital or your midwife. There is always someone to answer your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Antenatal Appointments

We have had to change the amount of times you see a midwife face-to-face during your pregnancy to protect you and the midwives. Therefore, some appointments are being conducted on the phone or by video call. You can find the schedule of care that you can expect below. We still assess everyone's case on an individual basis so if we feel you need more face-to-face appointments, we will let you know. Please attend these appointments if we recommend them as we will only recommend it if the risk to you not having that appointment is greater than the risk of Coronavirus.

The community team will call you before face-to-face appointments to ask if you or anyone in the household is experiencing symptoms of Covid-19.

Please be honest with us when we ask so that we can take necessary precautions to minimise our risk or rearrange your appointment if necessary

Type of Contact	Frimley Park Hospital	Wexham Park Hospital
Booking Appointment	Telephone/video consultation. This is your first appointment with your midwife where you receive information on choice of place of birth, diet and lifestyle recommendations, pregnancy care services, maternity benefits and screen tests	Short face to face appointment to take bloods, blood pressure, urine test. The rest of the appointment conducted by telephone/video consultation
First Ultrasound between 11+2—14+1 weeks	Ultrasound scan at hospital Booking bloods, blood pressure and urine screen Collect handheld notes	Ultrasound scan at hospital Collect handheld notes
16 week midwife appointment	Telephone contact Discuss results of blood/screening tests, scans and discuss further care	Telephone contact Discuss results of blood/screening tests, scans and discuss further care

Type of Contact	Frimley Park Hospital	Wexham Park Hospital
Ultrasound scan by 20+6 weeks	Ultrasound at the hospital	Ultrasound at the hospital
25 week midwife appointments (for first time mothers only)	Telephone contact to discuss 20 week scan, This may be face-to-face dependant on individual need.	Telephone contact to discuss 20 week scan, This may be face-to-face dependant on individual need.
28 week midwife appointment	Face to face contact Measure blood pressure, test urine, measure size of abdomen, screening blood test to check for anaemia and antibodies. Anti-D if required. GTT if required.	Face to face contact Measure blood pressure, test urine, measure size of abdomen, screening blood test to check for anaemia and antibodies. Anti-D if required. GTT if required.
All other antenatal midwife appointments	Face to face contact The following will happen at all appointments: blood pressure, test urine, measure size of abdomen. You can find the timings of the remaining appointments in your blue book or here The timings may vary slightly between each site but your midwife will tell you in advance when they will be	Face to face contact The following will happen at all appointments: blood pressure, test urine, measure size of abdomen. You can find the timings of the remaining appointments in your blue book or here The timings may vary slightly between each site but your midwife will tell you in advance when they will be

Antenatal Care

Should I still have Anti-D or vaccinations in pregnancy?

Yes—Any essential vaccinations or injections are still going ahead as normal and it is important you still get them for both you and your baby. They protect against serious and potentially deadly illnesses and stop outbreaks in the community.

Do I still need my Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)?

Yes, your community midwife will assess if you are at risk of developing diabetes in pregnancy, if you are at risk then a diabetes screening at 24-28 weeks is recommended.

At Wexham Park the usual 2 hour oral glucose test has been suspended but an alternative screening test is being offered which involves only 1 blood test rather than 2. This is because it is not possible to adhere to social distancing guidance for 2 hours in the antenatal clinic at Wexham Park. This will take place in the hospital and you will be given an appointment time to attend.

What happens to my consultant appointments in pregnancy?

Some appointments are being made by telephone or video call. You will be notified of any changes before your appointment. Please look out for any private numbers calling you as our number will not appear on your phone.

Can my partner/children come to appointments or scans with me?

No, we are asking that you attend any appointments and scans alone so that we can maintain social distancing guidance. We are giving you free photos of any scan at this time, but ask that you do not film them.

What happens if I think I have reduced fetal movements?

Please call us at any time of the day and night. Do not be worried about coming into hospital to be checked at this time as we are taking all necessary precautions to keep you safe. Please don't use a home doppler or apps as these do not give a clear indication of fetal wellbeing. For more information click [here](#)

What happens if I'm worried about me or my baby?

Please call us at any time of the day or night if you have any concerns at all. There is always a midwife manning the phones to give you the advice or support that you need. We are still inviting people in to be seen in person if needed, so please don't think that we won't be able to help you.

The numbers to call are:

Frimley Park: 01276 604527

Wexham Park: 01753 634520

Can anyone visit me if I am admitted antenatally?

No—this is in line with the Trust visiting guidance that says that there are to be no visitors at the moment. You will be reviewed daily or as things change when you are an inpatient so that we can get you home as quickly as is safe to do so.

Can I have a sweep?

No—we are advising against undertaking vaginal sweeps in the community at this current time, due conducting an intimate examination in close proximity that lengthens the time we are unable to socially distance. We have made this decision whilst trying to balance what is best for you, and also safest for you and the midwives.

How can I receive antenatal education at this time?

You can register for free online guides if you live in the Frimley area. This covers Ascot, Bracknell, Farnham, Maidenhead, North East Hampshire, Slough, and Windsor or in Surrey or South Bucks you can have free access to online antenatal and parenting guides with include top tips from registered midwives. Access to the guides including 'Understanding your pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby' is unlimited with no expiry date, so you can return as and when you need and want to.

Register [here](#) and apply the access code 'PARENTING' (or if you live in Surrey it is ACORN) to create an account and get your free guides.

(Access codes are not case sensitive)

Labour and Birth

I'm being induced—at what point can my birth partner join me?

Birth partners can attend hospital to support you during an induction once you have been transferred to the labour ward. The time at which this can happen can vary from person to person and is largely dependent on a number of factors individual to each person. This means it's difficult to give a generic answer, however as a general rule it is when you require one to one care or are in established labour. Unfortunately, we cannot allow birth partners on the antenatal ward for the start of the induction process as it would not be possible to adhere to social distancing guidance, but this becomes possible once you are transferred to a single room on the labour ward.

When is established labour?

This is when you are 4cm dilated with strong, regular contractions

How does it work when I come in in labour?

You will make your way to the assessment rooms as normal; this is MAC at Wexham and Labour Ward Triage at Frimley. Unfortunately, your birth partner cannot come in until you have been assessed as it is not possible to adhere to social distancing guidance. Your birth partner can drop you at front doors of the hospital. Your birth partner can bring bags etc. once they have been called to come in after you have been assessed. At this time you will be transferred to the room in which you will give birth.

Can I have a home birth?

No—at this time we have had to suspend our home birth service. Whilst home birth is a safe, natural process for a lot of women, we conduct home births safe in the knowledge that in the very rare case of a time critical emergency we have the ability to transfer you and baby quickly and safely to hospital. During this pandemic, the ambulance services are under immense pressure and as a result, we have made the decision not to potentially draw resources away from the ambulance service with a planned event.

Can I use the birthing pool?

Yes—we currently have one birthing pool on each site that can be used. However, guidance does not currently support the use of birthing pools if you have symptoms of Coronavirus or a positive test.

Is the birth centre open?

At Frimley Park—yes our birth centre is open as normal

At Wexham Park—currently no, we have decided to use our birth centre to care for women with Covid-19 symptoms or with a positive test. This is constantly being reviewed and we will keep you updated when we are able to reopen.

I wanted a home birth/birth centre—what will my birth be like now?

If you are booked at Frimley Park you can access our birth centre as normal.

At Wexham Park, we have created a birth centre environment on our labour ward with dedicated rooms that have been transformed to feel as close to the midwifery led unit as possible. We have removed unnecessary equipment, moved beds around or moved them out of the rooms altogether. We have birthing balls, bean bags, stools to help you stay as mobile as possible. The lights can be turned down and you can play music and use battery operated candles to set the mood.

What happens if I'm in labour and have symptoms of Coronavirus or a positive test?

You will be cared for in dedicated rooms with attached ensuite. Your birth partner can stay with you as long as they do not have Coronavirus symptoms. Your baby's heart beat will be monitored throughout labour. The current government advice is that you do not use the birthing pool if you have Coronavirus. Your baby can stay with you after it is born, but we recommend that you wear a mask when close to your baby.

What happens if I'm having an elective cesarean?

You will be greeted on the postnatal ward where you will be seen by the theatre team and someone will explain the next steps. Your partner cannot come into the postnatal ward at this point as it is not possible to adhere to social distancing guidance. Once you are ready to go to theatre, you can call your birth partner to come, someone will meet them at the doors and show them where to get changed. They will go to theatre and then have to leave on transfer to the postnatal ward afterward.

Postnatal Hospital Care

How long can my birth partner stay after the birth?

This is normally assessed on an individual basis as we take into consideration a number of things, so it is difficult to give a definitive answer. However, generally speaking this will be on transfer to the postnatal ward which is normally at least 2 hours after birth. For elective cesareans this is a little different, as you will be transferred directly to the postnatal ward from theatre. In this case, your birthing partner will have spent time with you and baby in theatre before you are moved. If you are discharged home directly from labour ward your birthing partner may be able to stay with you until discharge but this is dependent on other activity on the ward at the time.

How soon after birth can I be discharged?

We are doing all we can to expedite the discharge process so you can get home as quickly as is safe to do so. There are certain checks that are still essential for you to have before discharge, such as a newborn examination and a newborn hearing test, which is likely to take a few hours to be completed. We are conducting all of these checks in the hospital before you go home to avoid you making trips for appointments once you have been discharged. The quickest time to be discharged after having your baby is around 4-6 hours.

Will I get help to look after my baby/ies after if my birth partner isn't there?

Yes of course, we will always be here to help you care for your baby. We are getting lots of positive comments at the moment regarding the atmosphere on postnatal ward as it is very calm and quiet without visitors. We know that not having your birth partner can be worrying but we are still able to provide excellent care to you to ensure you feel well supported. Some mums are even finding they are chatting and getting advice from each other in the wards which is really lovely to see.

What happens if I have to stay longer than first thought and I need more stuff from home?

We would ask that you bring in as much as you can to the hospital when you arrive in labour and be as prepared as you can be for all scenarios. The reason for this is that every time someone leaves the hospital and reenters, the risk to other people in the hospital is much greater. However, we do understand that childbirth can often be unpredictable so if you do need more belongings from home we would ask that your birthing partners drops these at the door for a member of staff to collect and bring to you

Inpatient Care

Will I be tested when I come into hospital?

Yes, all women admitted to our maternity department on both sites will be receiving a routine swab for Covid-19 on admission in line with new government guidance. You will normally receive these results within 24 hours and results are checked at least once a day. If you are fit for discharge before your results are back, this will not prevent you from being discharged.

How do I know other patients near me on the ward don't have Covid-19?

Just like in the community it can be very difficult to tell if someone has symptoms of Covid-19. If someone is showing symptoms of Covid-19, they are being isolated. We are encouraging all women in the ward setting to social distance from each other, and we have adapted some of our ward areas to assist in this being achieved. The testing that we implemented earlier this week will help us identify any women who are not displaying symptoms.

What measures are in place to keep me safe in hospital?

We have strict infection control and cleaning guidelines that are being adhered to. We are requesting that you socially distance from other women if you are an inpatient on our ward areas. We have no visitors in ward areas and you are being asked to attend on your own for any appointments. All our staff are using the appropriate PPE when undertaking direct clinical care. We ask that your partner does not attend with you in labour if demonstrating Covid 19 symptoms and that you arrange for someone else to support you.

Postnatal Care At Home

When will I see my midwife once I'm at home?

Community midwives are not visiting you at home at the moment so these visits are taking place at various hubs in the area and you will be notified of where you need to go after birth. If you or your baby require any additional face to face appointments this will be arranged with you if clinically needed – this is assessed on an individual basis.

Anyone who was tested positive for Coronavirus in the hospital who has newly developing symptoms may receive a different schedule of care to what you will find below. You will be asked before each appointment if yourself or anyone in the household has any symptoms—please be honest with us so we can take necessary precautions or rearrange your appointment.

Type of Contact	Frimley Park Hospital	Wexham Park Hospital
First day home	Telephone/video consultation. If needed, face-to-face contact in a hub	If first baby, face-to-face contact in hub. If not first baby and no concerns telephone/video consultation. (can be face-to-face if needed)
Day 3	Telephone contact to check in and discuss how baby is feeding.	Telephone contact to check in and discuss how baby is feeding.
Day 5	Face to face contact in hub. Baby weight and heel prick test completed.	Face to face contact in hub. Baby weight and heel prick test completed.
Day 10-12	Face to face contact in hub. Weight and discharge to health visitors if appropriate.	Face to face contact in hub. Weight and discharge to health visitors if appropriate.

Isn't it safer to stay at home with my baby rather than travel to a hub?

We have had to take into consideration what the safest option is for you and your families as well as our staff. Midwives attending your home, and then moving onto another home multiple times a day would increase the risk to you and your family as well as the midwife. At the hubs we are able to maintain social distancing, clean the rooms between patients and maintain good hand hygiene keeping you and the midwives as safe as possible

How do I get support with breastfeeding?

We understand that not being able to attend infant feeding clinics at this time is difficult. Our infant feeding teams are still available to call if you need them and there are plenty of national helplines and resources for you to access.

Frimley Park: 01276 522433

Wexham Park: Will be in your red book which you receive on discharge from the hospital.



You can also find information [here](#) and [here](#)

We are in the process of implementing video consultations so that the infant feeding teams can check your latch by video call and give you tips on positioning and attachment.

How do I register the birth of my baby?

The requirement to register a birth is now deferred until we are through the current outbreak period, therefore the usual 42 day requirement to register your baby is no longer in place. The birth of your baby will still need to be registered but at a later date.

Please contact your local registry office when the current outbreak is over to make an appointment to register your baby. Please be advised that during this time you can now make a claim for child benefit or universal credit without a birth certificate.

In the absence of a birth certificate, you can temporarily register your babies at the surgeries using a copy of your birth or discharge paperwork that you will receive from the hospital. You can send them electronically to save you having to go to the surgery e.g. take a photo and send by e-mail. That way you can still make appointments for your baby with your GP.

Will I see my Health Visitor after birth?

Health Visitors are continuing to support families and new babies. Most face to face and drop in clinics have stopped however services are providing telephone or virtual contact and some face to face visits for vulnerable families or where there is an urgent need. You will receive a call normally between day 10-14 from your health visitor who will discuss your care plan with you. You can find numbers if you would like to speak to them in your red book which you will receive when baby is born.

For more information or a contact for where you live see below:-

If you live in Surrey click [here](#)

If you live in Hampshire click [here](#)

If you live in Bracknell click [here](#)

If you live in Slough click [here](#)

If you live in Windsor, Maidenhead or Ascot click [here](#)

When will things go back to normal?

It is very difficult to predict when we may be resuming normal services and we are being guided by activity in our units and government guidance. At this time, we are reviewing daily and as soon as we are able to resume normal services we will do so.



We really do understand how you must be feeling during this time and would always welcome feedback about how we could help ease any anxieties. We wish you all the very best with your pregnancy and childbirth journey and look forward to meeting you all.