

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

August 6, 2020

Universal Testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Women Admitted for Delivery

Anne Arundel Medical Center is now testing all women admitted for delivery of their newborn for COVID-19. Testing is now more readily available and OB patients can be asymptomatic carriers of the virus. Testing for COVID-19 is valuable as we work with you to plan for your health and the health of your baby while in the hospital and once you go home.

We know this process is unfamiliar to most, so we've anticipated some questions below related to these changes. However, do not hesitate to reach out to your provider should you have any other questions.

Is testing mandatory?

The purpose of the test is to ensure mom and baby are safe. Pregnant women present with different symptoms than other adults, and babies are not born with COVID-19; they become infected by transmission from a person who is infected after they are born. It is the ultimate decision of the patient to accept or decline the testing. If you chose to decline, you will be asked to sign a form indicating that you have been informed of the importance of the test and have made the decision to decline.

What type of test can I expect?

We will use nasal swab testing, to collect the sample from you that will be used for the test. After the nurse is done with your swab, they will put it in a tube and send it to the lab.

Once in the lab, the sample will undergo testing using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay. The purpose of the assay will be to detect small particles produced by the coronavirus, SARS-CoV2, the virus responsible for COVID-19. If particles are present in the sample, the test will be read as positive. If particles are not present in the sample, the test will be read as negative.

How will the sample be collected from me?

The nurse will put a long Q-tip inside of your nose, which will touch the back of your throat. Some patients say that it feels a little uncomfortable, or makes you feel like you need to sneeze. This is a common reaction. The nurse will put the swab into your nose and rub the inside for a few seconds to collect the best sample.

When can I expect to receive my test results?

You can expect test results within two to 48 hours, depending on which lab is used.

Will my partner also need to be tested if they are with me for the delivery?



No, they will not be tested. However, your support person must be free of COVID-19-related symptoms in order to accompany you in the hospital. Partners with COVID-19 related symptoms will be asked to leave as it is our responsibility to keep you, your baby and our staff safe and healthy. If your partner is unable to be there, you may invite another person to be at your side.

We do require the mother and the support person to wear a mask when they are in public spaces and when staff members come into the room. The first time you are met by our staff in the Clatanoff Pavilion, we will ask you and your support person some screening questions, take your temperature and give you a handmade mask to wear if you don't have your own. Patients who screen positive will be greeted by a Labor and Delivery nurse, who will provide the patient and the support person with a hospital grade mask and escort them to their designated room.

If testing of your support person is necessary, that testing will need to be determined by their primary care provider or other designated COVID-19 professionals.

Are you also testing babies?

If mom is positive, we will test babies prior to discharge from the hospital. We will also test any babies who have symptoms. To date, we have not needed to test any newborns because of symptoms.

What are the benefits of testing?

The benefits of a universal testing approach includes: assuring you and your baby receive the right care at the right time by the right people in the right environment.

What happens if my test results are negative?

You will be placed in a room on Labor and Delivery where the staff will wear the correct personal protective equipment to continue to ensure your safety and the safety of the staff.

What happens if my test results are positive?

If you test positive for the virus responsible for COVID-19, you will be cared for by designated staff. We have special protocols and processes dedicated to ensuring the safety of you, your baby and our staff while under our care. You will labor, deliver and recover on the same unit and if a C-section is required it will take place in an operating room dedicated to COVID-19 positive obstetrics patients.

If I test positive, will my baby and I be separated after birth?

We are no longer advising separation if the mother tests positive, based on new recommendations and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and others.



You may choose to keep your baby in the room to maximize the benefits of direct newborn care. We ask that mom and baby stay spaced six feet apart and that mom wears a mask and practices good hand hygiene before breastfeeding or other direct newborn care.

If you prefer, we can arrange to care for your baby in our NICU to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to your baby while in the hospital. If mom chooses temporary separation, we will gladly provide a hospital-grade breast pump for breastmilk expression during admission.

What if I am waiting for my test result or test negative, how should I interact with my newborn?

We encourage all moms to follow CDC guidelines that call for limiting exposure to newborns through hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water) before interacting with or feeding your newborn, and wearing a mask until you know your test results, if possible. If you test negative, a mask is unnecessary when you are alone in the room with your baby and support person, but hand hygiene should be maintained.

How are doctors, nurses and other staff being tested?

First, all nursing and medical staff are doing symptom monitoring twice a day. In addition, all staff are required to be masked, and wear protective eye protection at all times in the hospital. Staff who report any symptoms are referred to a special team of physicians who evaluate the need for testing and care. The physicians and nursing staff are dedicated to keeping every patient, baby and support person safe by adhering to the hospital guidelines for infection control and by working as a partner with you and your support person to keep us all safe.

