



January 4, 2022

Since our last email a couple of weeks ago, the rate of COVID-19 in the community and among our pregnant patients has continued to rise rapidly. The good news is that most of our pregnant patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 have mild symptoms that improve within a few days with rest and hydration.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, please test yourself. A positive home antigen test in symptomatic patients is sufficient for a diagnosis of COVID-19, and in this case you do not need to have a PCR test for confirmation. If you have a negative home antigen test or cannot obtain a home test, please call our office so that we can order a PCR test, which you can schedule at <https://covidtesting2.ynhhs.org>. If you have severe symptoms, like shortness of breath or high fever, you may need to see a physician or go to the hospital. **Please call us immediately if you are experiencing shortness of breath.** Do not delay! Please call during office hours to **speak with one of our nurses if you test positive for COVID-19 and have mild symptoms** that do not require immediate attention. As always, **if you are experiencing a true emergency, call 9-1-1.**

The guidance on isolation with COVID-19 infection is ever-changing. The CDC currently recommends that people with COVID-19 isolate for at least 5 days; if asymptomatic or if symptoms are resolving after this initial 5 days of isolation (including being fever-free for 24 hours), this can be followed with 5 days of wearing a mask when around others. Because our pregnant patients are more vulnerable than the average population, Yale is recommending that symptomatic COVID-19 positive pregnant women isolate for 10 days. We would therefore like to try to delay in-person visits for 10 days. If you need to be seen prior to 10 days, we will make appropriate accommodations to see you. Please call the office to speak with one of our nurses to arrange a visit. If you are a healthcare worker, please speak with your manager regarding the most up to date guidance for return to work policies.

As a reminder, pregnant women are at high risk of contracting COVID-19 and of having severe illness requiring hospitalization. In addition, COVID-19 infection has been associated with preterm delivery and an increased risk of stillbirth. Along with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine, **we strongly encourage all of our pregnant and lactating patients to get the Pfizer or Moderna COVID vaccine and booster. The combination of three shots is highly effective at preventing severe COVID-19 infection and hospitalization**, including the newest Omicron variant. Even patients who have had COVID-19 are encouraged to vaccinate. For information about how these vaccines work, please refer to the information on our website.

HOSPITAL UPDATES:

VISITOR POLICY: Throughout the pandemic **Yale New Haven Hospital has remained fully committed to allowing one support person for women in labor.** Any visitor supporting women in childbirth **must wear a hospital-grade mask at all times while interacting with staff and health care workers**, even after you (our pregnant moms!) have negative testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) on admission. This test generally takes about 2 hours to result, though occasionally this process takes longer. You may not change whom you designate as your labor support person. Unfortunately, the recent increase in COVID-19 infections in the community has prompted Yale New Haven Hospital to prohibit visitors to other areas of the hospital, which has translated to tighter restrictions on Labor and Birth. At this time, the hospital will no longer allow a second labor support person. We apologize for this change in policy, but this is to protect you, your family, and all of the care providers at the hospital during this current COVID-19 surge.

Please consider having a back-up option for a labor support person in the event that your primary support person is COVID-19 positive, does not pass the point of entry health screen or develops symptoms during your hospital course. Ideally this person does not reside in your home and has not been exposed to COVID-19.

NITROUS OXIDE: Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, in the interest of safety and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the hospital, nitrous oxide is not currently available for labor pain control.

ADMISSION / ENTRANCE TO THE HOSPITAL: Effective immediately, the entrance to the Children's Hospital is closed as temporary additional space is built for the Adult Emergency Department. All patients should now enter the hospital through the entrance to **Smilow Cancer Hospital at 35 Park Street**. This is a short walk around the corner from the Children's Hospital entrance. You will check in at the Registration

Desk at the Smilow Cancer Hospital entrance and will be directed from there. This desk is staffed 24/7. If you are in labor, please go directly to the front of the line.

YNHH PARKING: If you are presenting non-urgently, we encourage you to park at the Air Rights Garage at 60 York Street. There is short-term parking on floors 4, 6 and 8. The 4th floor has covered access to Smilow Cancer Hospital. Valet parking is available at both the main entrance to Yale New Haven Hospital at 20 York Street and at Smilow Cancer Hospital at 35 Park Street from 5am to 9pm

While we are all fatigued from the COVID-19 pandemic, we have learned a lot over the past 2 years. We already knew that simple infection control procedures greatly reduce the risk of all infections, from the common cold to gastrointestinal viruses to flu and COVID-19. This combined with vaccination significantly reduces the risk of severe COVID-19 infection and hospitalization. **Get vaccinated and boosted, and keep washing your hands frequently and wearing masks (fully covering your nose and mouth)** – especially at gatherings with people outside of your “bubble,” around anyone unvaccinated and in crowded indoor spaces.

We are here to support you and your growing family and feel privileged to be caring for you during this exciting time in your life. Stay positive, we will get through this together!

Warm Regards,

Thomas Hanson, MD, FACOG
Musa Speranza, MD, FACOG
Steven Fleischman, MD, FACOG
Michael Reel, MD, FACOG
Margaret Baumbusch, MD, FACOG
Meagan Haynes, MD, FACOG
Elizabeth Ackley, MD
Erin Moroni, FNP-BC