

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Partners and support people of women accessing maternity care

30 July 2020

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This advice applies for all women who are living or giving birth in Victorian maternity services.

Who is a partner, who is a support person and who is a visitor?

Partner	Support person	Visitor
The woman's spouse (husband or wife), de-facto, or significant other	The woman's family member, close friend or doula, who she has asked to provide her with support while she is in hospital	Other people, such as the woman's other children, her brothers and sisters, her parents, other extended family and friends.

When can a woman have her partner or support person with her?

Stage of care	When can a partner/support person be present?
Pregnancy care appointments	The woman's partner or support person can not attend routine pregnancy care appointments at the hospital. They can be with the woman during a telehealth appointment, if she wishes.
In-patient care during pregnancy	The woman's partner or support person can visit during times specified by the hospital.
Ultrasound scans and other tests	The woman's partner or support person can not attend routine ultrasound scans or other routine tests (e.g. blood tests) at the hospital.
Labour and birth	A partner or support person of a pregnant patient can attend the labour and birth for as long as required and they can stay after the birth for as long as required. If the partner or support person is unwell, they should stay home. If the woman's partner/support person has been diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19) they will need permission from the service to be able to enter the hospital. See the Cohorting advice on Page 2, for more information.
In-patient postnatal care	The woman's partner or support person can visit during times specified by the hospital, for up to two hours per day. One extra hour per day is allowable for preparing for discharge.
SCN and NICU	Parents/caregivers can visit their baby in SCN and/or NICU. Limit of one parent/caregiver per baby at a time.

Victorian Hospital Visitor Directions

See <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19> (click on Hospital visitors for current directions)

All visitors remain subject to the hospital's local operating procedures. Hospitals may impose higher restrictions in order to protect vulnerable people and staff in their particular facility.

Physical distancing guidance

See <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/covid-19-guidance-physical-distancing-health-services>

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Cohorting and masks for women and partners/support people during labour and birth

Women and partners will need to wear masks at all times in public facing areas

Partner/support person → Woman ↓	A well partner/support person	A well (asymptomatic) partner/support person who has been diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Asymptomatic woman	Hand hygiene and standard precautions	
Woman with respiratory symptoms (COVID-19 excluded)	Partner/support person may be asked to wear a mask in the birth room.	
Woman with respiratory symptoms (COVID-19 status unknown)	Consider both woman and partner/support person as suspected Coronavirus (COVID-19) until both confirmed negative. Partner/support person will need to remain in the birth room with the woman at all times. Partner/support person to wear a mask in the birth room at all times. Woman to wear a mask in the birth room if possible.	Consider woman as suspected Coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the admission. Partner/support person will need to remain in the birth room with the woman at all times. Partner/support person to wear a mask in the birth room at all times. Woman to wear a mask in the birth room if possible.
Woman with confirmed Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Consider partner/support person as suspected Coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the admission. Partner/support person will need to remain in the birth room with the woman at all times. Partner/support person to wear a mask in the birth room at all times. Woman to wear a mask in the birth room if possible.	

Further information

www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources#home-isolation-and-care

www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/

www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-services-and-general-practitioners-coronavirus-disease-covid-19

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019