



COVID-19 and pregnancy

If you are pregnant or due to give birth soon, the news about the COVID-19 pandemic can be stressful. This overview has some key messages from the maternity team at Waikato hospital.

It's a new virus

As [COVID-19](#) is a new virus, we are learning more about it every day. [Open this link to find out more about the virus.](#) These messages will be updated as more information comes through:

Healthy pregnant women are not more susceptible to serious illness with COVID-19

One of the first [studies](#), involving just nine pregnant women with COVID-19 demonstrated that none were seriously unwell and all mothers and babies recovered.

This study found none of the babies appeared to get COVID-19 and there was no evidence of the virus in the baby, breastmilk or fluid surrounding the baby. Since the study there are currently two cases worldwide of possible infection from mother to baby reported so far. In both of these cases infection may have been immediately after birth. We will update this page as more information becomes available.

In an [analysis](#) of 147 pregnant women with COVID-19, only 8% had severe disease and 1% were in critical condition. That's lower than the general population.

Pregnant women are generally more susceptible to viruses that cause breathing problems (like the flu*). Their immunity is lowered, their lungs are more compressed and they need more oxygen.

However, this doesn't seem to be the case with COVID-19. The [lowered immune response](#) of pregnancy, which is needed to stop a woman's body responding to her baby as a health threat, may actually provide extra [protection](#) with COVID-19. COVID-19 seems to be [more severe](#) in people with an immune system working hard dealing with other health disorders.

**Please note it is really important for pregnant women to have the seasonal flu vaccination to be protected this winter. Contact your GP practice to arrange to have the vaccination or ask your local pharmacist if they can administer the vaccine.*



How to protect yourself and others

Pregnant women should do the same things as the general public to protect themselves, including:

- follow the government advice and stay at home
- cover your mouth when coughing (by coughing into the crook of your elbow)
- washing hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer
- avoid people who are sick, if you are living with someone with COVID-19 or suspect COVID-19 ensure that they [isolate themselves from you](#).
- if you have any symptoms call your GP before you visit, or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453

Taking care of your mental well-being

We are in uncertain and unprecedented times, and everyone will respond differently to how COVID-19 is impacting them. It's important not only to look after your physical health but also your mental health. It's completely normal to be feeling a wide range of emotions, including being worried, anxious and scared. As we are all encouraged to stay at home, it is very important to stay connected with friends and whanau using technology and telephone contact. [Open this link for more information on wellbeing while you are staying at home.](#)

If you feel you need professional support for anxiety and distress you can call or text 1737 to talk with a trained counsellor for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you are currently getting help with your mental health - continue this – talk to your GP, counsellor, case worker or mental health team about how they can continue to support you over the phone, via email, text or video chat.

For up-to-date trusted information visit

[Unite against COVID-19: New Zealand Government](#)

[New Zealand Ministry of Health](#)

[World Health Organization](#)