

# Pregnancy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Making Decisions with Your Health Care Team

**Shared decision making lets you work with your doctor, nurse, midwife, doula, and whole health care team to make medical decisions together.** They can give you information about your health condition, treatment options, and can share the risks and benefits of each choice. With their support, you can decide which plan is best for you.

For more information, visit New Jersey's COVID-19 Information Hub at: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>.



## Here's how shared decision making can work for you:

- Let your health care team know more about your life: the things that are important to you, your goals, your concerns, and any symptoms you may have that they do not know about already.
- Know what choices you have and talk about them with your health care team. You can ask what they would recommend and why.
- Ask questions when you need more information.
- Think about all the information and talk with your health care team about what you think is right for you.
- It is your right to have someone interpret information from your health care team in a language you can understand.

**During the pandemic, there are some decisions you may have to make with your health care team about your plan of care, such as:**

### **1. Should my baby and I be separated during my hospital stay?**

The risk of your baby getting COVID-19 from you is low. It can be very good for both you and your baby to be together – skin-to-skin contact and keeping your baby in your room can make

bonding stronger, keep a baby's temperature normal, regulate your baby's heart rate and breathing, and lower your risk of postpartum depression and anxiety. Skin-to-skin contact and keeping your baby in the room with you are recommended, whether or not you have COVID-19.

If you have or think you have COVID-19, the risk of giving the virus to your baby is low if you take these safety steps: wear a face mask when you are near your baby and wash your hands before providing care to or holding your baby. Talk with your doctor, nurse, midwife, or doula about the risks and benefits of being in close contact with your baby.

## 2. Is it safe to breastfeed my newborn during the pandemic?

Yes, it is safe for you to breastfeed, whether you have COVID-19 or not. COVID-19 isn't known to be passed to your baby in breastmilk. Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for infants and provides many benefits to the infant, such as bonding, protection from illnesses and infections, and lifelong health and developmental benefits. Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce breast and ovarian cancer risk and can help reduce stress and anxiety.

It is possible for you to pass the virus to your baby through droplets from your breathing. If you have or think you have COVID-19, wash your hands with soap and water before interacting with your baby or touching your breast or breast pump, wear a mask when you are less than 6 feet away from your baby and while breast feeding or pumping breastmilk, and clean and sanitize breast pumps if pumping breastmilk. A mask should not be placed on children 2 years old or younger. Talk with your health care provider about whether breastfeeding, pumping milk, or using formula is right for you and your baby.



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If you don't have a care provider, find community navigators or contact tracers here: <https://211.unitedway.org/services/covid19>. Find language translation and TTY services here: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/caption/>.