

Regarding: Information about Coronavirus measures

Dear pre- or post-natal client,

There is currently a Coronavirus- (COVID 19) pandemic in the Netherlands. This means that many people have the same virus within a short time. Together with all obstetric practices, gynaecologists, ultrasound centres situated in the IJmond region, the Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis and the maternity care organizations situated in the IJmond region (www.ijmondgeboortezorg.nl), agreements have been made regarding the Coronavirus. These agreements will be in effect until at least 1 May 2020. We are informing you about this in this letter.

Because the situation is rapidly changing, our advice is also being adapted fast. Please keep your eye on the social media channels of your health care professional, and www.ijmondgeboortezorg.nl, so that you will stay informed of the latest developments.

Answer to questions about the virus and pregnancy

We understand you may have questions; for example, what you can do to prevent infection, whether the baby is at risk, or what you should do if you are infected. For the answers to these types of questions, please visit the RIVM website: <https://www.rivm.nl/coronavirus/covid-19/vragen-antwoorden>).

At this particular moment there are no indications that the COVID-19 virus causes an increased (or decreased) risk to expectant mothers, compared to others. Therefore, all instructions provided apply to pre- or post-natal patients too.

For your health, the baby's and ours, we would like to point out some important things. If you have had close contact with a person who may have the virus, because, for example he or she is a housemate or someone who has been in a high-risk area, they may have infected you. You could get a fever (body temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher) and symptoms like sore throat, headache, cold, coughing and/or shortness of breath. In that case, contact your family physician.

Should you experience **(mild) flu symptoms, (slight) fever, cold, or cough, we ask you not to visit the obstetric practice, hospital or ultrasound centre**, but to contact us by telephone. Together with you we will find a way to suitably deal with the particular situation.

The following hygienic measures are important:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Throw out tissues after using them
- Wash hands regularly or rub them with hand sanitiser
- Do not shake hands and do not greet people by kissing them
- Keep a social distance

Adjustments to our practice organisation during the virus pandemic

To be able to continue to responsibly provide obstetrics care during pregnancy, birth and post-natal, we have made agreements with surrounding obstetrics practices, GPs and hospitals:

- No check-ups are required between 16-27 weeks of pregnancy, medically speaking, and these will not be done, unless they are truly needed.
- Check-ups that do happen will be kept as short as possible. This means we will only check your blood pressure and your belly.
- We will answer questions by phone.
- We also request that you come to these check-ups alone and do not bring your partner or any children or family. They can 'join you' through a video call (for example with WhatsApp or FaceTime).
- All ultrasound appointments, also the 20-weeks ultrasound, will remain as scheduled. However, we do look critically at the medical necessity of each appointment, to limit said appointments to a minimum. Only (required) medical ultra-sounds will be done. Therefore all 'fun' ultrasounds until 1 May 2020 shall be cancelled.
- We will also be doing post-natal visits by phone, unless an inoculation has to be done or there is another reason for a home visit.
- We will also be doing the 6-week post-natal check-up by phone.
- Groups meetings, such as information evenings and Centering Pregnancy meetings will be cancelled, at least until 1 June 2020.
- Are you close to giving birth? The choice for a home or hospital delivery remains, unless you must deliver in the hospital for medical reasons. We can discuss the place of delivery with you again, also in view of availability of hospital beds and the pressure on hospital staff.
- If you are going to deliver in the hospital, for now only one companion is allowed at the birth (and at the hospital); extra people are also not allowed in the corridor or anywhere else in the hospital.
- If you have been tested positive for COVID-19 or you have a strong suspicion for having COVID-19, you will deliver in the hospital with a medical indication. Mother and child shall be checked on regularly. Before entering the hospital, you will receive a face mask and you will be asked to disinfect your hands at the front desk. You shall be picked up by a nurse or obstetrician wearing protective equipment.
- It is not allowed to receive visitors whilst the maternity help is present at your home. Cut your social contacts to a minimum to keep the risk of infection as low as possible. When you are about to receive visitors, make sure they are absolutely free of illness or symptoms before their visit you and always follow the mentioned hygienic measures.
- Visitation is also not allowed after delivery at the hospital. If you deliver your baby at home, ask your friends and family to visit only if they have no symptoms of illness.
- If you have to stay in the hospital longer, whatever rules the hospital is following will apply.
- Other than that, the same measures apply to pregnant women as to anyone else. Keep an eye on the news and follow the general guidelines of the RIVM.
- All practices in the region are doing their best to keep the chance of infection and spreading as small as possible. We have agreed to help each other if an obstetrician does fall ill. In this way the quality of our care will remain optimal. We are doing everything we can to guide you in the right way during this special time in your life.

Changes in our practice space related to the spreading of the virus

You will notice that we have made a few changes at our practice. To prevent infections, we have, for example, taken the magazines and toys out of the waiting room. We are also applying special cleaning rules and we are using hygienic aids where necessary.

The following measures specifically apply to pregnant women under supervision at one of the obstetric practices:

- No check-ups are required between 16-27 weeks of pregnancy, medically speaking, and these will not be done, unless they are truly needed. We realize this is quite a long period of time.
- Check-ups that do happen will be kept as short as possible. This means we will only check your blood pressure and your belly.
- We also request that you come to these check-ups alone and do not bring your partner or any children or family. They can 'join you' through a video call (for example with WhatsApp or FaceTime).
- We will answer questions by phone.

The following measures specifically apply to pregnant women under supervision at the Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis (at the gynaecologist or obstetrician):

- Planned check-ups at our polyclinic will proceed as planned, we follow an individual approach.
- We also request that you come to these check-ups alone and do not bring your partner or any children or family. They can 'join you' through a video call (for example with WhatsApp or FaceTime).
- We do look at the necessity of every consultation. It is possible that future consultations are being changed into telephone appointments. We follow the national advice for our profession.

Adjustments regarding the postpartum period:

- Intakes regarding maternity care shall be done by telephone.
- It is not allowed to receive visitors whilst the maternity help is present at your home. Cut your social contacts to a minimum to keep the risk of infection as low as possible. When you are about to receive visitors, make sure they are absolutely free of illness or symptoms before their visit you and always follow the mentioned hygienic measures.
- The number of hours of maternity care that you receive can be different, depending on the organisation. This may differ from the number of hours you requested. If there is a strong suspicion or you or a member of your family has been **tested and proven positive for COVID-19**, the number of hours of maternity care you get depends on the amount of protective provisions available for the maternity nurse. When there are no protective provisions available, maternity care shall not be available at your home. Together with the others involved we shall look for a solution.
- Maternity visits by the obstetrician will be done by telephone. Only on medical indication the obstetrician will visit you at home for check-up.
- The 6 weeks post-control shall also be done by telephone.

Youth healthcare

- The 22-week vaccination and maternal whooping cough vaccination for pre-natal patients shall proceed as normal.
- Consultation hours shall be cancelled at all locations until 6 April 2020.
- The heel prick shall be performed at your home during the first week of your postpartum period.
- To keep this visit at your home as short as possible, you will receive the rest of the information by phone.
- The hearing test shall be performed at a later time.



- When you are concerned, have questions or if you want to make an appointment you can give us a call: 088-9959595.
- You can also video call (Skype, WhatsApp), and send us photo's or short videos.

Precautions behind the scenes

Behind the scenes together we are taking the necessary precautions, strictly following the recommendations of the RIVM, the GGD and the ROAZ (regional organisation for immediate care). There are roadmaps in case our health care professionals get sick or the hospital gets overstretched by the current pandemic. In addition, there are protocols (working arrangements) in case a pregnant woman or woman in labour is suspected of having COVID-19 or has been tested positive on COVID-19.

If you still have questions after reading this information, you can always ask us, of course. We will continue to provide you with high quality care to the best of our ability. For current information, you can also visit the website of your health care professional!

In conclusion

These are peculiar times, but luckily, we live in a down-to-earth region. We very much hope for your understanding and co-operation. Of course, we also care for our own health. This way we take care of each other!

Kind regards,

On behalf of the complete team of obstetricians, ultrasound specialists, maternity helps, nurses, gynaecologists, paediatricians and the Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis.

Ijmond Geboortezorg