

Childbirth and COVID-19: Keeping Expecting Mothers and Newborns Safe at KershawHealth

By: Christi Kirven, BSN, RNC-MNN - KershawHealth Women's Center Director

Pregnancy always comes with its share of anxiety and fear, but the COVID-19 pandemic has added a new layer of concerns for expecting families. If you will be delivering a baby during the pandemic, you likely have many questions about how delivery in the hospital may be different right now and how you can keep yourself and your baby healthy.

KershawHealth has always taken great pride in caring for expecting mothers and their babies and making sure that our community has access to great OB care. This dedication to our region's growing families has continued throughout the pandemic and will go on long after this health crisis has passed.

We are committed to making sure that all moms and babies have the safest birthing experience possible, and we are taking every necessary precaution to protect our families in labor and delivery from exposure to COVID-19 and ensure the risk of infection expecting mothers and new babies is extremely low. Our extra precautions mean that some aspects of delivery will be as expected, but some may be a little different. The two main changes most families will experience are visitor restrictions and limited entry points to the hospital.

As part of our COVID-19 preparedness efforts, we have moved to a zero-visitor protocol hospital-wide. However, laboring and postpartum mothers are an exception to this rule. These women may have one healthy adult with them for their delivery and the duration of their hospital stay. This means that every woman will be able to have a companion for as long as they are in the hospital, but visits with the new baby and siblings and other loved ones will have to wait until mom and baby leave the hospital.

Additional measures KershawHealth is taking to support and ensure the safety of our expecting mothers and newborns include:

- COVID testing and/or illness screening for all patients upon arrival.
- Isolating any COVID-19-positive patients away from expecting mothers.
- PPE available for laboring and postpartum mothers.
- Early discharges (24 hours vaginal and 48 hours cesarean), as long as mom and baby are doing well.
- Remote lactation support.

These measures have been implemented with great care, and we will continue to update them with the health and safety of our expecting mothers and families in mind.

In a time of uncertainty, the one thing all of our expecting families can be sure of is that our experienced OB staff members stand ready to help you on your journey to bring new life into the world. We are here to support you and keep you safe – today and every day the future holds.

You can find more information about COVID-19 and how KershawHealth is responding here [KershawHealth.org](https://www.kershawhealth.org) or by contacting your care provider.