

COVID-19 Maternity update

Epworth Freemasons



Friday, 3 September 2021

Epworth Freemasons is doing everything possible to minimise potential exposure to COVID-19 within our hospital. We have a number of protocols in place to protect you, your care team and other families.

As we continue to meet Department of Health directives, we continue to update our protocols and we encourage you to keep in touch via our social media and website.

Things may look a little different in areas of our maternity hospital at the moment, but rest assured the same excellence in care remains. We continue to do all we can to support you before, during and after your baby's birth.

Please understand these protocols have been put in place to minimise the number of people coming and going within our unit, to reduce potential COVID-19 exposure to you and your baby. We are doing everything that we can to protect you, our staff and our doctors.

We have compiled the most frequently asked questions about maternity and how we are caring for you and your family during COVID-19.

Compulsory COVID-19 testing for all maternity patients

All maternity patients and their designated support person must be tested weekly for COVID-19 from 37 weeks onward. This testing helps protect you and minimises the risk of transmission to other patients and healthcare workers. As with any community COVID-19 testing, you and your support person will need to self isolate until the result of your tests. If your result shows a negative, you should then follow the current Victorian government restrictions until your next scheduled test, or your baby's birth. If you return a positive result, you will need to let your obstetrician know and follow Department of Health instructions.

What if you know the day that your baby will be born?

Patients and their partner or support person, booked for an elective Caesarean section or booked induction, are required to have weekly COVID-19 testing from 37 weeks onwards and self isolate after each test. The patient and their support person should have a final COVID-19 test no more than 72 hours before their admission. After the final test, they should self isolate, according to [these guidelines](#).

Where should I be tested?

You and your support person are able to have your COVID-19 swab at any testing clinic that is convenient to you. Please see [this list](#) for your local COVID-19 testing site.

We also have our Epworth Freemasons COVID-19 Testing Clinic available to you and your partner or support person. It is located on B1 of our car park, below 124 Grey Street East Melbourne. It is open from 9am – 4pm, Monday to Friday and bookings are essential. To secure your booking, please call 03 9426 0666.

Can my partner or support person stay with me during my stay in both the Birth Suite and Postnatal Ward?

We know how important it is to have your partner or support person with you for your baby's birth and in those early days of their life. Under current restrictions you may have one support person (including a partner) with you in our Birth Suite. They do not have to be from the same household and there are no time limits. That one partner or support person is permitted for the duration of your Postnatal stay.

Please be aware that you cannot swap support people and that person will be required to wear a mask while in our hospital. A second support person may be permitted in compassionate circumstances, with prior approval.

Can my partner or support person leave the hospital and come back?

We urge your partner or support person to limit the number of times they come and go from our maternity unit and only leave if absolutely necessary.

Can I have visitors?

Currently, no visitors are allowed in our Postnatal units. Once admitted to hospital, please speak to the midwife in charge regarding the restrictions if you have any questions or would like to apply for an exemption in exceptional circumstances.

Can I stay at the Park Hyatt?

We have suspended our popular Epworth x Park Hyatt Melbourne program during these current restrictions. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you informed, so please continue to check our social media and website for any updates.

Fresh48 Photography and hairdressing services

Given the restriction on visitors within our maternity wards, our photography and hairdressing services are also suspended. We do look forward to welcoming back our preferred photographer [BellaFresh48](#) and Jayne from [Mama's Angels](#) hairdressing, when the time is right. Please contact Bella or Jayne directly for any out of hospital service options, when they become available.

Community outbreaks and isolation

As a precaution, anyone who has visited a red zone or high-risk exposure site in Australia, should get tested and receive a negative result before entering our hospitals. Please check the [current list of exposure sites](#) in Victoria. If you have visited any of these on the dates and times listed, you must get tested and follow the current DH advice.

Will I be guaranteed a private room?

Yes, all of our inpatients enjoy spacious, private rooms and ensuites at Epworth Freemasons at either our Victoria Parade or Albert Street maternity wards.

Can we visit our newborn baby in the Special Care Nursery?

Yes, the parents of a newborn baby within our Special Care Nursery can keep visiting however the restrictions on other family members remain, including siblings. This is to ensure that we can keep physical distancing, within the nursery.

Can I go home early?

Epworth Freemasons continues to allow this and we provide early discharge packages to women who wish to return home before their stay is due to end. Please know that you are under no obligation to go home early and our midwives will discuss your options. This is a regular service for families and it is not because of COVID-19.

What if I become unwell while I am in hospital?

If you start showing signs and symptoms associated with COVID-19 while in hospital, please alert your midwife immediately. We will arrange urgent swab testing. In the meantime, you will have to stay in your

room until we receive your results. Our midwives will continue to care for you, using personal protective equipment (PPE), until we have your test results.

Will you still have Lactation Consultants available during and after my inpatient stay?

Our specialist Lactation Consultants continue to provide a wonderful service to all of our new mums. The fact to face inpatient service continues and we have lactation consultants available for one on one appointments after you go home, via Zoom call. If you would like to speak with a Lactation Consultant, please don't hesitate to ask your midwife, call 03 9418 8310 or email breastfeedingservices@epworth.org.au

Are you still providing antenatal education?

Our popular face to face Antenatal Education Program is currently suspended. However, we have delivering online education classes and learning packages. You can book your classes [via our website](#) or by using the information in your Welcome to Epworth Maternity pack. Our midwives are also here to answer any further questions after your class and you can [book an antenatal telephone call time here](#).

Our Maternity Concierge is here for any further questions you may have about your stay. Please feel free to call her on 03 9418 8300 (select option 1) or email maternity@epworth.org.au. If you have any medical concerns, please speak with your doctor or call our birth suite on 03 9418 8302

We look forward to welcoming you to Epworth Freemasons.