

COVID-19 Maternity update

Epworth Geelong



Friday, 17 September 2021

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

To adhere to any 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 now, but rest assured the same excellence in care remains. We will 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 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

From Monday, 20 September 2021, 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?

If you are booked for a Caesarean section or planned induction, you and your support person are required to have a COVID-19 test no more than 72 hours before admission and then self-isolate at home until receiving a negative test result and until your admission.

Where should I have the COVID-19 test?

Patients should attend a testing site closest to home or they can have the test at:

Melbourne Pathology Epworth Geelong

Level 1, Epworth Geelong

1 Epworth Place, Waurin Ponds

Opening hours:

8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

8.30am – 1pm Saturday and Sunday

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/partner with you in our Birth Suite and for the duration of your postnatal stay. This person will be required to wear a mask while in our hospital.

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

We urge your support person/partner to limit the number of times they come and go from our maternity unit and only leave if 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 current restrictions, if you have any questions. In exceptional circumstances, siblings are allowed onto the ward during the day if they are unable to be cared for elsewhere.

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 quarantine advice.

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

Yes, the parents, carers or guardians 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 Geelong continues to allow this in consultation with your obstetrician and midwifery team. Please know that you are under no obligation to go home early and our midwives will discuss all of 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 have the results. Our midwives will continue to care for you, using personal protective equipment (PPE), until we know the 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 inpatient service continues and we have lactation consultants available for one on one appointments after you go home. If you would like to speak with one of our Lactation Consultants, please don't hesitate to call 03 5271 8323.

Are you still providing antenatal education?

Our popular face to face antenatal education program is currently suspended. However, we have online learning packages that have been developed specifically for your Epworth Geelong experience. The antenatal program includes videos that can be watched in the comfort of your own home and a live, online Q&A zoom session with one of our experienced midwives. These are held in small groups so that we can answer all your questions in real time.

You can book your classes directly with our Maternity services team on 03 5271 8323.

If you have any questions about the pandemic restrictions at Epworth or any medical concerns, please call the Maternity Unit on **03 5271 8379**. We look forward to welcoming you to Epworth Geelong.