

# Guidance for Visiting the Maternity Wards and attending Antenatal Clinic Appointments during COVID-19

The health, safety and wellbeing of our women, visitors and staff remain our absolute priority and this procedure must be followed strictly in order to minimise the risk of transmission of Coronavirus.

The Trust reserves the right to refuse or end a visit if safety cannot be maintained.

**All visits to the Maternity Wards MUST be booked with the ward beforehand.**

If you have any queries or concerns about this information and the arrangements please speak to the Maternity Ward teams on Lincoln 01522 573134, or Boston 01205 44527

## Wash your hands often

Clean your hands frequently by washing them with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitiser. This will help protect you and the people you live with. This is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of passing infection to others.

Following the national review of visiting in hospitals and release of NHS Framework we have undertaken a risk assessment and review to consider how we can safely increase visiting within the Maternity Service.

This leaflet explains the process and the precautions we have taken and is designed to help you understand how we can enable visiting but do so safely for everyone.

## Appointment system and making a booking.

Because the Maternity Wards have some rooms with multiple beds we have considered how we can safely maintain social distancing and the only way to do this is to have an appointment system to manage the number of people visiting at any one time.

- You will only be able to visit if you have made an appointment.
- Patients cannot have multiple visitors each day even if they are separately booked; this enables more patients to have a visitor.
- Please call the respective maternity ward to arrange the appointment
- Please be patient if there is a wait for the phone to be answered as our wards are very busy.
- A visiting appointment is for 3 hours and only one person can visit other than in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the ward staff.

## Coming to the ward

- If you or anyone in your household have any symptoms of potential COVID-19 infection (temperature, new persistent cough, loss of taste or smell) **you MUST NOT visit.**
- If you have someone in your household who is shielding or in a high risk vulnerability group then you need to be cognisant of the risk of attending the hospital and then returning home.
- On entering the hospital you must wear a mask or face covering and follow social distancing rules and wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE such as masks and gloves) as directed and wash or sanitise your hands before entering the ward. You will be provided with a fresh mask at the ward and will discard this when you leave.
- You should aim to arrive at the ward **not more than 5 minutes** before your allotted visit time to minimise the number of people who are waiting and wait in a socially distanced fashion outside the ward door until you are welcomed in one at a time.
- On entering the ward you will be asked to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer if there is not a nearby sink and put on a fresh mask.
- You will then be accompanied to the patient you are visiting and the bedside precautions explained to you.
- You should avoid touching surfaces or any of the bedside equipment
- You should avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands and to cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.
- In the event that you need to speak with ward staff or leave the bedside for any reason you should use the call bell and wait to be answered rather than go to find someone.
- At the end of your visit you will be accompanied to the ward exit and instructed how to safely take off and dispose of your PPE before washing or sanitising your hands and leaving the ward. Please replace your personal face covering / mask on leaving the ward and follow social distancing until you exit the premises.

## Antenatal Clinic:

- Women may bring one person with them to any early pregnancy ultrasound scan (USS) and the dating USS at 12 weeks including the follow up consultation by either the midwife or the Doctor.
- Any woman attending a 36 week ANC appointment at the hospital may bring one person with them. This does not include the 36/40 USS.
- Additional monitors/equipment are being installed in the USS scan rooms this week to be able to accommodate partners attending the 20/40 USS. Commencement date to be confirmed and shared ASAP.
- Attending persons may be asked to wait outside until the woman is taken through for her appointment. This is to enable adequate social distancing.

- Attendance may be facilitated in other circumstances but this will need to be discussed on an individual need basis with the Manager or Matron.
- All visitors should have viewed or been provided with a copy of the 'Visiting during COVID-19' information leaflet and agree to abide to the restrictions and that we reserve the right to refuse a visit in the event of these requirements not being followed.

#### **Antenatal Assessment Unit/Antenatal Assessment Clinic:**

- As of Tuesday 15th September women may bring one person with them to any appointment within the assessment centre/unit.
- If the woman is not seen immediately on admission then the attending person will either be asked to wait in the waiting room / corridor/ or outside of the unit to enable adequate social distancing. Once the woman is taken through to her room the attending persons may join.

#### **Labour Ward:**

- Any women admitted to Labour Ward/Bardney Ward may attend with one person.
- If a labouring woman wishes to have 2 birthing partners then a further discussion is to be had with the labour Ward Coordinator to see if this can be facilitated. Social distancing permitting. Some labouring rooms cannot accommodate 2 birthing partners due to limited size of the room.

#### **Maternity Ward/Nettleham:**

- Visiting times will be extended to 3 hour slots, 9am-12md, 1pm-4pm, 5pm-8pm.
- Only one visitor per woman each day.
- There will be no more than 2 visitors in each 3-4 bedded bay at once, therefore visiting slots need to be booked in advance either on the morning or the evening before.
- For women attending for induction of Labour the attending person may stay for the entirety of the initial process then they will be asked to leave the ward. If it is completed within the 3 hour visiting slot then they may be able to remain on the ward for the remainder of the time. E.g. if you attend at 9am for your induction and the process is completed by 11am then your attending person can remain with you until 12md.

#### **Community Midwife Appointments**

- Partner attendance at Community Midwifery appointments entirely depends on the location of the Community Midwifery appointment and the guidance set out by the host location. i.e. GP Surgeries or Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) for Children's Centres. Currently women still need to attend Community Midwifery appointments alone. We are reviewing this guidance with the CCG and LCC and will provide updates should the advice change

**We appreciate that these precautions may feel restrictive however we are sure you appreciate that they have been developed to keep you, our patients, our staff and wider community safe and to minimise the risk of infection.**