

Information for Pregnant People Isolating at Home with Omicron Covid-19

Please note that recommendations may change as the pandemic evolves
(Current at 8/3/22)

Covid -19 Protection Strategy

The best way to protect yourself against Covid-19 is to become fully vaccinated including a booster shot 3 months after your 2nd dose. Booster shots are recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Mask wearing and hand hygiene will also reduce your risk of becoming infected and transmitting the virus.

Be Prepared for self-care with Omicron at home

Now that Omicron is in our community, it is important that you are prepared for home isolation and care of yourself and your whanau. If one of your whanau tests positive, then everyone in the household will need to isolate.

When you are self-isolating, food and other necessities will need to be delivered to you. Organise a friend outside your household to stay connected with you and drop off supplies.

If you need help whilst you are isolating at home, you can call the COVID-19 support line 0800 512 337, or the Hauora Health Hub 08900226829. There is support available for access to food and essential items, support with mental health and financial support.

- Make a list of your emergency contacts.
- Consider how you will manage tamariki and other dependants; you may need a couple of options for childcare when you are labouring/birthing in case your first choice is also in isolation.
- Advise your friends and whanau that you are self-isolating.
- Stock your "Path to Wellness Kit"
 - Nasal sprays – check with chemist for suitability during pregnancy
 - Throat lozenges - check with chemist for suitability during pregnancy
 - Paracetamol
 - Hand sanitiser
 - Gloves
 - Masks
 - Tissues
 - Rubbish bags
 - Cleaning products
 - Honey
 - Lemon juice
 - Regular medications
 - Lip balm / balm for around your nose
 - Treats 😊
 - Activities for children

What to expect if you contract Omicron Covid-19

The Omicron variant of Covid-19 is not like the Delta variant. For fully vaccinated people Omicron is likely to be a mild illness like a heavy cold with a duration of 5-7 days. Fit and healthy pregnant women who are fully vaccinated and boosted, may experience mild to moderate upper respiratory symptoms such as:

- Runny nose
- Sore or scratchy throat
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Headache

- Head congestion / blocked sinuses
- Muscle aches
- Abdominal pain
- Fever

If you have these symptoms, please contact your GP or the Covid Support Line 0800 512 337 for advice and to arrange a Covid test.

Caring for yourself at home when you have Omicron

Caring for yourself at home with Omicron will be like the care you give yourself when you have a heavy cold. It would appear from overseas experiences with Omicron that it does not usually cause a cough. It is also possible to test positive for Omicron and yet have no symptoms.

- You may take Paracetamol 2 x 500mg tablets 6 hourly for headache, sore throat, or muscle aches.
- You are advised to rest as much as possible as you will recover more quickly.
- Ensure you remain well hydrated with water or fresh juices.
- Honey and lemon drinks may help with your symptoms.
- You can relieve a stuffy nose with nasal sprays – check with your chemist that they are OK to use in pregnancy.
- You may like to use a steam inhalation, put a bowl of hot water in your sink, lean over the bowl and put a towel over your head. Breathe slowly and deeply to help relieve congestion.
- Eat to satisfy your hunger, you may lose your appetite.
- Apply a balm to your nose and lips if they get dry and sore.
- Burn or bin your soiled tissues as soon as you have used them
- Monitor your symptoms and if you develop chest symptoms like a cough or wheezing then contact your GP or After-Hours Medical Centre for advice.
- It is expected that you will recover from Omicron in 5-7 days.

In the case of an obstetric emergency, you must ring your midwife, if your Covid symptoms are worsening you should call your GP or Healthline on 0800 358 5453 or 111 for all other emergencies.

Antenatal care for people who test positive for Omicron Covid-19

If your test is positive for Covid-19, your GP will advise you of the result if you have had a PCR test. If you have self-tested with a RAT and **if your result is positive you will need to upload your results**. Please refer to the instructions supplied when you collected your RAT's. **Please advise your LMC** if you do test positive.

Most people who test positive for Omicron will recover at home. Your LMC will send a referral to CWH obstetric team to determine your need for an obstetric consultation based on how your pregnancy is progressing and any other health issues you may have.

During the infectious phase of Omicron, you may receive your midwifery care remotely via phone call, zoom, FaceTime or face to face if needed. If you need face to face midwifery care, then your midwife will wear PPE (protective gear) and provide you with the appropriate care. Your midwifery care will be tailored to meet the needs of you and your pēpi.

Labour & birth care for people who test positive for Omicron Covid-19

Your labour and birth care will happen as normal unless you are in the active phase of Omicron infection. In this event if you were planning to birth at home you will need to discuss with your LMC whether this is still suitable depending on the degree of symptoms you have and how you are feeling. If there are other features of your pregnancy that mean you should birth at Christchurch Women's Hospital, then you will need to go there. In the active phase of Omicron your midwife will always be wearing PPE (protective gear) as will other health care providers who may be caring for you face to face.

All women will require a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) at the point of admission to any birthing facility - CDHB and St Georges

- Your midwife will be wearing PPE (protective gear) in accordance with your infection status.
- You will be supported to labour and birth at the most appropriate place for you and your pēpi, this could be at home or in the primary or tertiary facility.

- If you are Covid positive, you may use Entonox (“the gas”) as **inhalational analgesia is not an aerosol producing activity**.
- If you are Covid positive but are otherwise fit and well, you may choose to labour and birth in water.
- Covid positive support people may attend with a labouring/birthing woman so long as they always wear an N95 mask, maintain social distancing where possible and undertake regular hand sanitation. If the support person becomes more unwell during the labour and birth, they may need to go home and rest. You may like to organise a backup support person in case your primary person is unable to provide the necessary support.
- After your pēpi has been born you will remain at your place of birthing until your midwife and the CDHB staff consider it appropriate for you to go home. You will **not be able to transfer to another CDHB facility or to St George’s Maternity**.

Postnatal care for people who test positive for Omicron Covid-19

- There is no additional special care required for a baby born to a covid positive mother other than the normal newborn observations by the midwife and the parents. However, it would be wise for a Covid positive mama to wear a surgical mask whilst feeding and caring for pēpi during the infectious phase of the illness.
- Prior to transferring home your midwife will determine that you and baby are well enough to do so.
- If you do go straight home your midwife, her backup or locum will visit you within 24 hours and continue with your regular postnatal care
- You will be able to access Pasteurised Donor Milk from the Rotary Community Breastmilk Bank (RCBMB). Please contact the RCBMB (03 375 6281) for more information, the availability of PDM and the process for collecting it. Covid positive people may not enter the milk bank. Persons collecting milk will also be required to show a vaccine pass.

Your Midwifery care if your midwife becomes unwell

- If your midwife becomes unwell your midwifery care will continue to be provided by another midwife.
- Midwifery practices have been making contingency plans for your care when midwives are unwell.
- You may receive care from your backup midwife, one of the midwifery practice partners, from a midwife in another practice or through Christchurch Women’s Hospital.
- The way you receive your care may also be different. This could be via a phone call, Face Time, Zoom, face to face in clinic or at home or a combination of these methods.

At any stage during your birthing journey, you are encouraged to contact your midwife, GP or Healthline if you need advice or reassurance.

Catherine Rietveld

Covid Liaison Midwife

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