Coronavirus update 4/2/2020

How are you all doing? We continue to be impressed with how flexible and understanding each of you has been as we make changes to our office. We remain healthy and ready to care for you – the best part of our jobs is patient care. Whether in person, over the phone or via telehealth, we are here to provide you routine prenatal care, answer your questions and make sure that you feel as well informed as ever.

We continue to strongly believe that Yale New Haven Hospital is as prepared, if not more prepared, than any other hospital to care for all patients, pregnant and non-pregnant, and those affected by COVID-19 and those who are not. The leadership teams are learning from the experiences of other hospital systems in New York and other places. As more data is flowing from these institutions, we are all working hard to ensure that best-practices are implemented and followed in order to keep patients, visitors, providers and staff healthy. We are all focused on providing state-of-the-art safe and compassionate care.

We would like to bring to your attention some changes that are underway for in-patient hospitalization:

**COVID-19 SCREENING:** In line with the experience at all other hospitals in the Northeast, Yale New Haven Hospital is seeing an increase in COVID-19 in asymptomatic patients. In order to provide the safest care for our patients and to protect all of the staff caring for you (doctors, nurses, cleaning staff, food service personnel), all pregnant women now will be tested for COVID-19 on admission to the hospital. Do not be alarmed by this change. This is simply improved screening in order to keep you and your baby safe.

**LABOR SUPPORT PERSON:** We believe that a labor support person is essential to your in-patient care. Yale New Haven Hospital continues to allow one labor support person for each admitted pregnant woman. Your labor support person will also be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 infection (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, GI symptoms) as well as for possible COVID-19 exposure prior to coming to the hospital. Any labor support person who has resided in or commuted to New York State in the 14 days prior to your admission will not be allowed to accompany you. Please understand that this is to protect you, the other patients and babies around you, and all of the people caring for you during your admission.

**FACEMASKS:** Very good data supports the efficacy of facemasks in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. As such, to protect both you and our staff, all hospital providers are routinely wearing facemasks (often with face shields) while interacting with you. We are also encouraging patients and visitors to wear facemasks as an added layer of protection. We have certainly noticed that many of you are already doing this for your office visits – please continue to do so, and bring your mask with you to the labor floor. While there is no current hospital policy requiring facemasks, we believe this added layer of
protection is appropriate and will protect you and your partner. You do not need to be the highly discussed N95 mask – a regular surgical mask or homemade fabric facemask is just fine.

**LABOR ANALGESIA**: Due to the risk of aerosolization of viral particles with the use of nitrous oxide, this method of pain control is not currently being offered. Our full-time obstetric anesthesia team remains ready to provide epidurals as needed for pain relief.

**LACTATION SUPPORT**: We continue to have in-patient lactation support. In addition, the hospital is now offering outpatient lactation visits via telehealth. To schedule an appointment, call 203.688.3840, option 4.

**CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION**: Unfortunately, all in-person childbirth education classes and maternity tours have been cancelled. Fortunately, evidence-based, family-centered and baby-friendly eClasses are still available and can be accessed on a computer, tablet or phone. In addition, they are working on updating a picture gallery so that you can get a better sense of what the labor floor and postpartum areas look like. To learn more, visit: www.ynhh.org/services/maternity-services

We know some of these changes may be unsettling for you, and we would like to remind you again that we are here to answer your questions and support you during this unprecedented time. Having a baby is a very exciting time in your life. Remain excited to bring new life into this world knowing that we are doing everything we can to keep you and your growing family safe and healthy.

**And we will keep reminding you to do the following:**

- Practice **social distancing**
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly and effectively, for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Find time for **exercise** and **get outside**! Practice mindful meditation.
- Avoid unnecessary **social interaction** – work from home if possible. Do not visit restaurants, movies theaters, coffee shops, public spaces. Limit your trips to the grocery store. No play dates, parties, visiting friends/family. Instead have virtual parties.
- Avoid unnecessary **travel**, even locally
- Do not share **food**. Cook your own meals if possible.
We are here for you! Take care of yourself and your family, and please let us know how we can help you. We are all in this together.

Warm Regards,

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