Coronavirus update 3/23/2020

How are you?? We know how concerned you and your families are about the coronavirus and how this is going to impact your pregnancy. We are here for you. Please do not feel alone in this.

We write to you today because many of us have seen the news that NY Presbyterian Hospital made the decision to no longer allow visitors, including partners, for women admitted in labor, and we want you to know the latest: The New York Department of Health has issued a statement that identifies “one support person essential to patient care throughout labor, delivery and the immediate postpartum period. This person can be the patient’s spouse, partner, sibling, doula or another person they choose.”

We could not agree more. Having a labor support person is essential to your in-patient care. We want you to know that as your care team we have been and will continue to advocate for what is best for you and your family during these unprecedented times. Safe patient care is first and foremost, and we strongly believe that care involves your labor support person.

Dr. Hanson is a member of the Board of Trustees of Yale New Haven Hospital. Dr. Fleischman is the Associate Chief of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Yale New Haven Hospital. As members of the leadership teams at Yale, they are working hard to ensure that compassionate care of our patients remains a top priority as Yale New Haven Hospital continues to provide safe care of all patients. We 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.

What can you do? All of the things we have already asked you to do:

- 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.

As a reminder from our prior email:

**OFFICE HOURS:** 9am – 4pm. If you have a non-urgent issue we ask that you please call during these hours. As usual, we have providers on-call for emergent issues if you need to reach us outside of our regular office hours. If you call the office with a non-urgent problem and reach the answering service, please call back again in a couple of hours or message us through MyChart.

**PROVIDERS:** We have already made changes to our providers’ schedules and are likely to need to make additional changes. Please be flexible. You may need to see a different provider than you were scheduled to see.

**NO VISITORS:** Without exception, all patients are asked to come to your office appointments unaccompanied, including partners and children.

**PREGNATAL VISITS:** We have made modifications to the schedule for prenatal visits. These changes are in-line with well-documented routine practice patterns utilized by many practices prior
to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Unless there is a medical indication for more frequent visits, you can expect going forward that your appointments will be scheduled in the following time frames:

- 7 – 12 weeks: confirmation of pregnancy / initial ultrasound in our office
- 18 – 20 weeks: anatomy ultrasound at Yale Maternal Fetal Medicine
- 22 – 27 weeks
- 28 – 31 weeks
- 32 weeks
- 36 weeks
- 38 weeks
- 40 weeks

**TELEHEALTH:** We are having a lot of success with TeleHealth visits. There are some prenatal counseling and follow-up visits that are appropriate for TeleHealth, such as counseling regarding genetic testing, gestational diabetes management and peripartum mood concerns. In order to do this, you need to sign up for MyChart and have the MyChart app on your smartphone or tablet. Please call our office if you need assistance with this.

**PRENATAL LABS:** Some of our patients have expressed concerns about presenting to Quest and Yale clinical laboratory sites for routine prenatal lab draws. Please understand that these labs are a critical part of your prenatal care. **No COVID-19 testing is being done at any outpatient clinical lab.** Please utilize usual hand hygiene practices while visiting all outpatient sites, but do not be afraid to have your labs drawn.

**ANTENATAL TESTING:** For our patients who are recommended to have antenatal testing, we are rearranging our offices in New Haven and Guilford to accommodate you. Previously all of our patients were sent to the Maternal Fetal Medicine department for this testing due to space constraints.

In addition to changes in our clinical practice, we would like to make you aware of some changes at Yale New Haven Hospital

**COVID-19 SCREENING:** All patients and visitors are being screened for possible COVID-19 infection (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, GI symptoms) as well as for possible COVID-19 exposure prior to coming to the hospital. If you screen positive you will be given specific instructions for your arrival at the hospital.

**LABOR AND DELIVERY:** All patients are limited to ONE caregiver. This includes your spouse, a doula, a family member or friend. Only one of these people is allowed to be with you while you are in the hospital and you may not switch out caregivers while you are on labor and delivery. We apologize for this change in policy, but this is to protect you, your family, and all of the care providers at the hospital in this unprecedented time.

**SCHEDULED CESAREAN SECTIONS:** Necessary pre-operative blood work will be done the day-of your procedure rather than the day before.

**PHYSICIANS:** As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout our community, our providers may also become infected or be required to self-isolate. As such, it is possible that we may need to change the way we provide in-hospital care. We are working with the entire community of obstetricians as well as with the Maternal Fetal Medicine department to best determine how we can continue to provide care to every pregnant mother as this pandemic increasingly impacts us locally. This may require a model of care that brings together all of the local obstetricians and midwives who already deliver at Yale New Haven Hospital to share in your care during your labor, delivery and postpartum care. This is not ideal for any of us, and we ask for your understanding as
we navigate these uncharted waters. We will keep you updated regarding any changes along these lines.

**Please, please, please continue to practice social distancing. 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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