



# Perinatal Care During COVID-19

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NEW JERSEY  
HEALTH CARE

**QUALITY  
INSTITUTE**

# About the Quality Institute

- We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan, multi-stakeholder advocate for health care safety, quality, and affordability for everyone.
- We are a membership organization, with over 105 member organizations across all of the sectors of the health system.
- We accomplish our mission through:
  - Policy changes
  - Community Health and Wellness programs
  - Education
  - Quality Improvement

# Recommendations of the New Jersey Perinatal Care During COVID-19 Work Group



- Recommendations can be found at: [www.njhcqi.org/maternity-care](http://www.njhcqi.org/maternity-care)
- Will be updated weekly on Fridays

# Perinatal Care Recommendations

- Recommendations are divided into the following topics:
  - Prenatal Care
  - Triage & Testing Guidance for Facilities
  - Labor & Delivery
  - Postpartum Care
  - Alternative Birthing Sites

- Where appropriate and feasible, routine prenatal visits can be conducted via telehealth.
- **Conduct social determinant of health screens early** in pregnancy and continue to re-evaluate throughout the pregnancy.
- Consider additional education and support needs of patients during COVID-19.
  - **Start conversations early** about breastfeeding, support persons, delivery procedures, supplies needed, and contraception
- **Communicate changes** in policies and protocols widely (i.e. in office, on website) and in multiple languages.

# Triage & Testing Guidance for Facilities

- *If COVID-19 PCR testing or rapid antigen testing methods are available, test all pregnant patients prior to or at the time they present at the facility.*
  - Allows the patient and their health care team to identify the best plan of care
- *If COVID-19 PCR testing or rapid antigen testing methods are limited, prioritize testing based on the patient's clinical presentation and history*

- **All patients are allowed one, asymptomatic support person for the duration of their birthing experience.**
  - DOH issued this guidance on March 29, 2020
  - Signed into state law on May 15, 2020
  - Consider Changing DOH guidance to allow facilities to also allow Doula in addition because part of care team
- All health care providers and institutions should follow the CDC's recommendations for PPE use optimization.
  - Educate patients on what to expect
- L&D units should have plans in place to accept patients being admitted with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

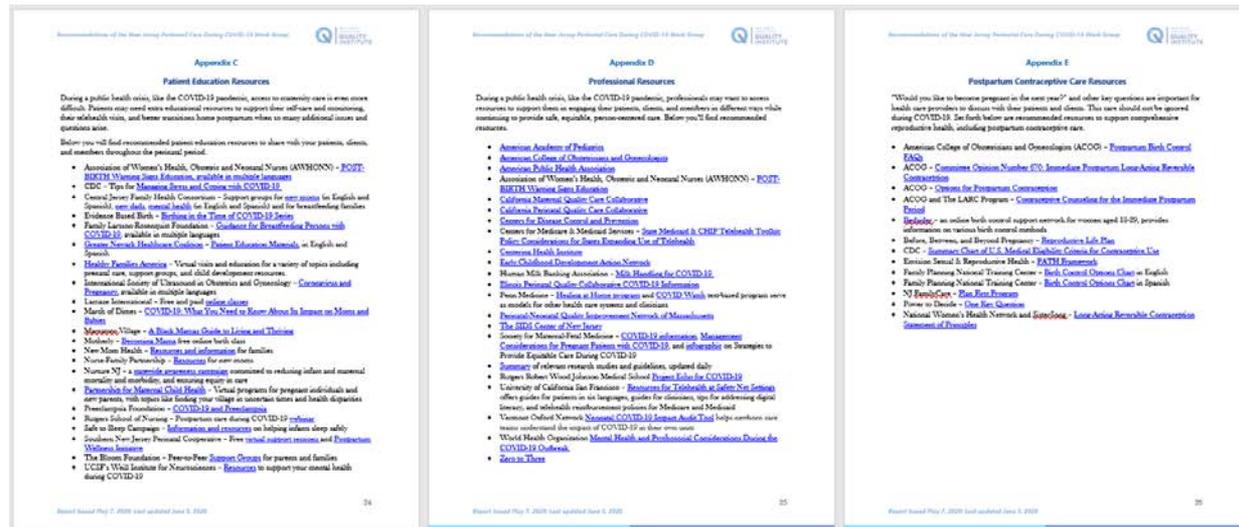
- Separation of infants from patients
  - Educate patients early on the benefits of skin-to-skin contact and the potential for horizontal transmission of COVID-19 to infants
  - **Shared decision-making should fully involve the patient**
  - Assess the patient's ability to maintain separation at home
- Lactation guidance
  - Educate patients on the known protective benefits of breastfeeding as well as the potential risks of direct breastfeeding during COVID-19
  - **Shared decision-making should fully involve the patient**
  - Whether patient chooses to breastfeed, pump, or use donor milk, educate on infection prevention strategies

- Newborn nursery/NICU protocols
  - Infants with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be isolated from asymptomatic or COVID-19 negative infants
  - Consideration should be given to the following *before* an infant is separated from the patient:
    - Ability of the patient to maintain separation once discharged
    - Separation of the infant is not without risk of infant exposure to COVID-19 by an asymptomatic health care provider
    - Whether a better use of the admission stay would be to educate the patient on strategies to prevent COVID-19 transmission and protect the infant
- Prior to discharging, consider additional education and support needs of patients during COVID-19.
  - Protocol changes on postpartum and pediatric follow-up visits
  - Web-based resources
  - Availability of supplies needed
  - Signs and symptoms to look for

- Encourage patients to talk with their physician/midwife/doula before changing their birthing plans
  - Hospitals and licensed birthing centers are putting protocols in place for birthing during COVID-19
  - Patients should be made aware of changes to protocols and provided an opportunity to express their concerns, fears, anxieties and ask questions

# Additional Resources in the Report's Appendix

- Short- and Longer-term Policy Recommendations
- Patient Education Resources
- Professional Resources
- Postpartum Contraceptive Care Resources
- Suggested Supplies for Patients
- Available Resource Support Through Insurers



# Thank You

For any questions, please contact:  
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