

Your Prenatal Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic

How will the COVID-19 pandemic impact my prenatal care?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our top priority is to keep our patients, staff, and communities safe. To do this, we are limiting in-person contact by reducing in-person visits at your prenatal clinic and the hospital. We are doing this by replacing some in-person care with **virtual prenatal care**.

What is virtual prenatal care?



Virtual prenatal care is a safe, convenient way to get your prenatal care from home. Using your phone, computer, or tablet, you can sign into a private telephone call or videoconference with your doctor or midwife for your prenatal checkup appointments.

Over 90 out of 100 (90%) of our pregnant patients who had virtual prenatal visits at Michigan Medicine this year reported they were satisfied with virtual care. Our patients found virtual visits easy, convenient, and a great time to talk to their doctor or midwife about pregnancy topics.

Even though many of your appointments will be virtual and will take place on your phone or computer, you will still have in-person appointments with your doctor or midwife when you need them.

Will I still get the same quality of prenatal care?

You will still receive the same high-quality care and the same number of prenatal services you normally would. To keep you safe, some services may be grouped together to reduce the number of times you have to come to your prenatal clinic. You and your doctor or midwife will review the visit schedule below, and make sure that it will work for you and your needs.

What can I expect during my prenatal care visits?

Descriptions of each of your visits starting with your first visit (intake) are outlined below.

Visit (Week)	Visit Type	Testing	Ultrasound	Vaccines
Intake	Nurse Call			
8-12	In-Person	✓	✓	✓
16-20	In-Person			
19-21	Ultrasound (Fetal Diagnostic Center)		✓	
24-28	Virtual			
28-30	In-Person	✓		✓
30-32	Virtual			
34-36	In-Person	✓		✓
36-38	Virtual			
39	In-Person			

Find more prenatal topics for each week of pregnancy here: MiPATH: Prenatal Patient Resources: <https://michmed.org/xo6j5>

Will I receive additional prenatal education?

Yes, in addition to the prenatal education your doctor or midwife will provide at your in-person visits, our team has compiled several resources to support your learning at each stage of your pregnancy. These resources cover a range of topics such as pregnancy, infant care, comfort measures in labor, proper breastfeeding positioning, baby development milestones, and infant behavior. All classes are currently virtual to keep you and your family safe. To access additional resources, visit: <https://michmed.org/xo6j5>

Do I need to any equipment for my virtual visits?

You will need a blood pressure (BP) cuff for your virtual visits. You are not required to purchase a scale or fetal Doppler monitor to check your baby's heart rate. However, you may choose to purchase these devices for your own reassurance. If you choose to monitor these, you should plan to complete this during your virtual visit and share your values with your doctor or midwife.

Blood pressure cuff: a device used to measure blood pressure that consists of an inflatable cuff, a measuring unit, and a mechanism for inflation which may be a manually operated bulb and valve or a pump operated electrically.

Fetal Doppler monitor: a handheld ultrasound device that helps detect your baby's heart beats.

If you would like to purchase a home fetal Doppler monitor, we have a list of recommended devices. To see the list, visit <https://michmed.org/Or3Yw>

How can I monitor my blood pressure at home?

You will take your blood pressure during each of your virtual visits and report this information to your doctor or midwife. For more information on how to use your device, visit <https://michmed.org/Or3Yw>

How can I monitor my baby’s heart rate and movement at home?

It is safe to complete your virtual visits without a **fetal Doppler monitor**. We would encourage you to monitor your baby’s movement by using “kick counts”. This means recording the number of times your baby kicks, twists, and turns. You will usually feel your baby move by the 20th week of pregnancy. For more information on how to use your device, visit <https://michmed.org/Or3Yw>

How do I measure my baby’s movements with “kick counts”?

1. **Get relaxed and comfortable.** Loosen tight clothing. Lay down on your side or sit with your feet propped up. Minimize distractions like your phone and TV to help you concentrate.
2. **Note the time you start. Count movements until you reach 5.** Each roll, kick, punch, or twist counts as 1 fetal movement. If the baby is quiet, drink a glass of cold juice and start over.
3. **Note the time you finish counting.**

For more information on using “kick counts” to measure your baby’s movements, visit <https://michmed.org/Or3Yw>

How can I feel supported while practicing “social distancing” during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Social distancing is intentionally keeping physical space between you and other people to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. We know this can be difficult, especially during pregnancy. We have to set up online support groups for

women with similar due dates so you can communicate with people going through a similar experience.

If you are interested in participating in an online group, visit <https://michmed.org/gkAYW> or scan the QR code.

If you are feeling sad and down, have trouble getting the resources you need (like food, paying your bills), are concerned for your safety, or need additional support, please contact your provider.

Should I have my baby at home?

We still recommend that you deliver at the hospital where we have all available resources to help you, not at home. We have infection control procedures in place to help keep all of our mothers and babies safe. Due to the rapid changes to COVID-19 in Michigan, our policies are changing regularly. At this time, we are testing all patients coming to the birth center for COVID-19.

- If testing is positive, the patient is allowed to have 1 support person with them for their delivery,
- If testing is negative, the patient is allowed to have 2 support people.

Where can I find more information?

To access the most up to date visitor policy, visit this site:

<https://michmed.org/gkmqW>

If you have more questions, you can reach out directly to your doctor or midwife through the patient portal. For more information on home births, please visit: <https://michmed.org/yVwnK>

Thank you for choosing to receive your care at Michigan Medicine and helping us take the best care of our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic!

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Alex Friedman Peahl MD, MSc
Edited by: Karelyn Munro, BA

Adapted from: The University of Utah. *What is virtual prenatal care? 2020*, Access online: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/virtual-care/virtual-prenatal-care/what-is-virtual-prenatal-care.php#overview>

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 05/2022