COVID-19 has created unanticipated consequences for all of us. Providing safe care for our patients while protecting our caregivers is our top priority. Current national and local public health officials are recommending COVID-19 testing for every person admitted to the hospital. This includes laboring patients. Patients scheduled for procedures, including scheduled induction of labor or cesarean-section, will be tested 48 hours prior to admission. Your OB provider will tell you when and where you should be tested. If you come to the hospital in labor, we will perform testing when you arrive.

We are testing all patients for several reasons:

1. There is widespread community transmission in our state. This community spread is most pronounced in our urban areas.

2. There is a percentage of the population who are asymptomatic carriers for COVID-19, meaning they are positive for the virus and have the potential to infect those around them but don’t know it yet. Knowing your COVID-19 status when you are in the hospital helps to keep our healthcare workers safe, you and your baby safe, and the community safe from the spread of COVID-19.

3. Knowing if you have COVID-19, gives our team the opportunity to provide you with important health and safety education to decrease the chance of spreading the virus to your infant.

If you test positive for COVID-19:

- You may have a healthy birth-partner with you during your labor, delivery and recovery. Your birth partner will be asked to stay in the hospital with you during the duration of your hospital stay to reduce potential spread.

- Current national guidelines, strongly recommend babies of COVID positive moms be cared for in a separate room after delivery to decrease risk of transmission to the baby.

- Because babies have undeveloped immune systems, they are of increased risk for getting COVID-19. Babies respond in different ways to this virus. Severe illness, even death, has been reported in infants with COVID-19.

- After delivery your infant will be cared for in our state-of-the-art Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Knowing your COVID-19 status when you are in the hospital helps to keep our healthcare workers safe, you and your baby safe, and the community safe from the spread of COVID-19.
• Your baby will be tested for COVID at 24 and 48 hours of age, if still hospitalized at that time.

• While your baby is in the NICU, only a parent who has tested negative for COVID will be allowed to visit. Moms diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be able to visit the baby in the NICU.

• As soon as possible, NICU staff will setup FaceTime/Zoom with you and your baby. You can invite other family members to Zoom time with you and your baby as well.

• You are also able to call the NICU for updates on your baby.

• Breastfeeding is important for your baby. If you would like to breastfeed, we encourage using a breast pump in order to decrease the risk of transmission of the virus during breastfeeding. Your pumped breastmilk will be brought to your baby’s room by your nurse and fed to your baby.

• As long as your baby is symptom-free and has no other health concerns, your baby will be discharged with you with instructions on how to safely care for your baby at home.

• These are the recommended national guidelines for caring for a women who has or is suspected of COVID and her baby. We recognize, you may not feel comfortable with this plan of care. If you choose to keep your baby with you after delivery, they will need to stay in the room with you for the duration of your hospital stay. We will educate you on the appropriate measures to decrease transmission as much as possible. In this case, we will ask that you sign a waiver of responsibility, to demonstrate that you have received the information regarding risk and benefits of your choices.

Due to COVID-19, public health department, state and local governments have advised limited visitation for inpatients during the pandemic.

• If you test negative for COVID-19, but your infant requires NICU, our NICU allows one designated parent to visit their infant in the NICU.

• All hospitalized patients and visitors will have their temperature taken and screening questions asked at the hospital entrance.

• All patients and visitors are asked to where a mask when in public areas of the hospital.
  • If you have a homemade mask, please bring it with you to the hospital.

We are excited to help you welcome your child into this world. Our goal for every mom and baby at MercyOne is to provide a safe delivery and recovery.