



# GP News

Connecting healthcare for the benefit of patients

## **Thank you for partnering with us to provide high quality healthcare in these challenging times.**

While we have put in place a number of changes during the current COVID-19 restrictions, the Women's encourages GPs to continue to refer eligible patients as per usual for maternity, women's health and gynaecology, and other healthcare.

In this edition of GP News you'll find an overview of service changes at the Women's; useful resources for information about COVID-19; and an update about the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) project.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in contact. Our details are listed at the bottom of this email.

Kind regards,

GP Liaison Unit,  
The Royal Women's Hospital



## Changes to services under COVID-19 restrictions

The Women's has transitioned some services and clinics to telehealth.

Services currently offering telehealth, when clinically appropriate, include some maternity, women's health and gynaecology, and allied health appointments; pre-admission appointments and home domiciliary services.

The Women's continues to see patients in person when clinically indicated.

For general information on referrals, please see our [Referrals page](#).

## Women's Health and Gynaecology referrals

The Women's is continuing to receive and triage patient referrals for both Parkville and Sandringham during the current COVID-19 restrictions and **we encourage GPs and other health professionals to refer patients to us as per usual**.

We are prioritising appointments so that patients who require urgent review are seen as soon as possible.

For more information, see our [Women's Health and Gynaecology Referrals page](#).

## Women's Health elective surgery

While the Women's is continuing to provide surgical services for all Category 1 patients and, where possible Category 2 patients, non-urgent elective surgery is temporarily reduced at the Women's as per the [current Australian Government directive](#) for all public and private hospitals in Australia.

**We are contacting all patients on our waiting list to discuss the plan for their surgery**, and we are asking them to let their GP or other health professional know if they experience changes to their condition.

**If there is a clinical deterioration, health professionals are asked to fax a referral to the usual fast fax referral Fax: 8345 3036**, indicating the woman is awaiting surgery and include how her clinical condition has deteriorated, with relevant investigations if appropriate. A clinician will review her situation and notify you and the woman of the outcome.

## Maternity referrals

The Women's is continuing to receive and triage maternity referrals during the current COVID-19 restrictions and **we encourage GPs and other health professionals to refer eligible patients to us as per usual.**

Please include in your referral a blood pressure reading, along with the usual BMI, relevant history and any examination findings and test results.

For low-risk women, we recommend they participate in the Shared Maternity Care program during which some appointments are conducted by the Shared Maternity Care provider over the phone or videoconference call. The Women's will continue to support our Shared Maternity Care GPs, obstetricians and midwives throughout the provision of care.

For more information, see our Maternity referrals page and Shared Maternity Care page.

## Antenatal, labour and postnatal care

At our Parkville site, the Women's is offering outpatient telehealth appointments, when clinically appropriate. If a woman is identified as suitable for a phone or video appointment, she is contacted by the hospital directly and provided with details.

Maternity inpatients at Parkville and Sandringham are limited to having one partner or support person with them during their stay (including labour). At Parkville, there is no time limitation. At Sandringham visiting hours are between 8am and 7pm.

For more information, see our Your hospital visit or stay page.

The Women's is continuing to provide postnatal care in the home. With COVID-19 restrictions in place, part of the consultation is being conducted over the phone so that the time our midwife spends in a patient's home is minimised.

Our Childbirth Education program is now available online, with the recent release of 10 videos to help inform and prepare expectant parents for labour, birth and early parenthood. To view, visit our Childbirth education page.

The Parkville maternity video tour is also still online and accessible here.



## Other general precautions at the Women's

Patients, their support person, and our staff are being screened prior to entering the hospital and social distancing measures are in place.

For more information, see our [Screening measures page](#).

As more is known, the Women's is updating its information on pregnancy and breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information, see our [Advice for breastfeeding women page](#) and [Advice for pregnant women page](#).

## Are pregnant women considered an 'at risk' group for COVID-19?

At this time, pregnant women do not appear to be more likely to develop severe COVID-19 than the general population. It is expected that most pregnant women who develop COVID-19 will experience mild or moderate illness from which they will make a full recovery.

However, there is currently limited information available regarding the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women and their babies. Therefore, it would be prudent for pregnant women to practice social distancing and ensure good hygiene practices to reduce the risk of infection. ([DHHS](#))

**Additional resources for information about pregnancy and COVID-19**

- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) has information and updates for pregnant women and their families, pregnant healthcare workers, and a portal for healthcare professionals.
- The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RCOG) UK also has information for healthcare professionals and pregnant women.
- HealthPathways Melbourne has published a COVID-19 response package for GPs to use.

## Access to electronic medical records

The Royal Women's Hospital, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital will launch the Parkville electronic medical record (EMR) on 8 August 2020.

As part of the EMR, GPs, specialists and other healthcare professionals will be able to sign up to access selected parts of their patients' medical record via a secure website called 'Parkville Connect'.

With patient consent, GPs will be able to see:

- Upcoming and past hospital visits
- Inpatient and outpatient progress notes
- Discharge and after visit summaries
- Laboratory and imaging results
- Allergies, medical history and medications.

In the coming months we will be providing more information about Parkville Connect and details for how to register. Stay tuned!

## Influenza vaccine reminder

A reminder that the influenza vaccine is recommended during every pregnancy and at any stage of pregnancy.

If a woman received the 2019 influenza vaccine earlier in her pregnancy, it is recommended she receive the 2020 vaccine if still pregnant – however only one dose of government-funded influenza vaccine is available for pregnant women each year.

## Recent news

- *Breast symptoms must not be ignored during COVID-19 – [read here](#)*
- *Research to improve knowledge on how pregnant women are affected by COVID-19 – [read here](#)*
- *International Year of the Nurse and Midwife – [read here](#)*
- *Women's health champions make Honour Roll – [read here](#)*

## Contact

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GP Quick Access Number ph: (03) 8345 2058

The Women's Switchboard ph: (03) 8345 2000

The Women's Abortion and Contraception service

professional line (03) 8345 3061 (not for use by

women needing the service).

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