

DATE: 25 January 2022

Guidance for birthing women across Hunter New England Health facilities

Due to the current risk of COVID-19 transmission, visitor restrictions remain in place across all NSW health facilities, including maternity units.

We recognise having a trusted birth partner as a participant-in-care is known to make a significant difference to the safety and wellbeing of a woman during labour and birth. As a result we have made some small changes to our current approach.

Across all our facilities, birthing women are allowed one nominated participant-in-care, regardless of their vaccination status, for the duration of labour, birth and the postnatal period. They may visit the postnatal ward during the hours of 8am to 8pm.

The participant-in-care will be required to:

- Undergo a rapid antigen test on arrival to the birth suite on the day of baby's birth and again on arrival to the postnatal ward every second day
- Wear a mask at all times and maintain social distancing

The participant-in-care will be given a letter that outlines the current requirements and documents the results of their rapid antigen test. This letter must be carried at all times while in the hospital.

A participant-in-care will not be permitted entry to the hospital if:

- They are COVID-19 positive
- Have symptoms
- Are considered a close contact and are required to isolate

If the participant-in-care returns a positive rapid antigen test while visiting the postnatal ward, they will be asked to leave immediately and self-isolate at home.

Prenatal appointments

Currently, women are unable to be accompanied for prenatal appointments due to the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

If you have specific concerns regarding these restrictions, you're encouraged to speak with your treating team regarding seeking an exemption on compassionate grounds.