

March 19th, 2020

## **Work Restrictions and Recommendations For Pregnant Patients:**

### **Re: COVID-19/Coronavirus and Pregnancy**

We currently do not have clear guidelines for work recommendations specific to pregnant women from professional organizations such as the CDC or American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. We are formulating our practice recommendations based on general best practices to decrease exposure to COVID-19. We feel it is best to be prudent and extremely cautious as there is no clear data regarding the effects of COVID-19 in pregnancy. Talk to your employer about what they are doing to protect you and other employees during this time.

### **Does COVID-19 affect pregnancy women or developing fetuses?**

The short answer is we do not know yet. There are so few pregnant women that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 that this data is changing day to day. Viral illnesses often pose risks in pregnancy, and pregnant women have compromised immune systems, so theoretically we consider them at higher risk of any viral illness while pregnant. Currently we are extrapolating all our recommendations from the SARS outbreak from 2002 and MERS outbreak from 2012, other types of coronavirus infections.

### **Our Current Recommendations:**

1. Social Distancing: Currently the best preventative measure to decrease risk of COVID-19 transmission is social distancing. If a job function can be performed from home or remotely we strongly urge you exercise this option to decrease your chances of exposure.
2. Wear a Mask: If you cannot work remotely, we recommend wearing a mask to prevent droplet transmission of viral particles. We understand there is a debate regarding regular masks vs N95 rated masks. We feel something is better than nothing, and we are observing regions that mandated all citizens wear masks have curbed the spread of the virus better than others.
3. Consistent Hand Washing/Sanitizing: We recommend hand washing and sanitizing on a routine basis per CDC's guidelines, as well as limiting touching your face.
4. Quit Smoking: If you are pregnant, we have likely recommended you quit smoking to improve safety in pregnancy. This is even more important in the context of COVID-19 as this is a respiratory virus.

If your employer has questions regarding your ability to work please feel free to discuss it with us so we can come up with solutions. Limiting going into the work place to 1-2 days a week instead of everyday will still decrease risk of exposure to some degree.

Sincerely,

Northwest Obstetrics and Gynecology PLLC