BAPM - COVID-19 pandemic: Frequently asked questions within neonatal services

Health Policy team
British Association of Perinatal Medicine
This document, published by the British Association of Perinatal Medicine, has been compiled by consensus, considering feedback from perinatal professionals and guidance from both RCPCH and RCOG, as well as national guidance on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. It was last updated in September 2021.

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About

The BAPM website hosts COVID-19 Pandemic - Frequently Asked Questions within Neonatal Services. These FAQs offer advice on management of specific situations and should be interpreted in conjunction with local and network guidance relevant to current societal restrictions.

The evidence base around SARS-CoV-2 in the newborn has increased significantly in the past year and a half; while there are now some data to indicate the possibility of perinatal transmission, this is uncommon, and severe illness in the newborn very rare.

Maternal COVID-19 is, however, associated with increased risk of stillbirth and preterm birth and there is very clear evidence that pregnant and breastfeeding women should be encouraged to accept immunisation.

Data are emerging regarding the negative impact on both babies and families of access and PPE restrictions imposed during the pandemic, which must be balanced against the changing risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2.

This latest amendment includes an update on published evidence and advice on COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy. The guidance highlights the risk of collateral damage from policies adversely impacting on parental and extended family presence in the Neonatal Unit (NNU), including the wearing of face coverings. As partners in care, parents should be treated in the same way as NNU staff in terms of testing and self-isolation; national guidance on self-isolation is quoted as of August 2021 but you are advised to ensure that this has not been amended.

Any potential risk to patients of fully immunised neonatal staff returning to work...
within 10 days of potential contact with SARS-CoV-2 must be weighed against the risks of suboptimal NNU staffing numbers and increased in utero and/or neonatal transfers.

This advice is aligned to the four nations' IPC guidance; membership of the IPC cell includes Scottish Government HAI policy Unit, National ARHAI Unit Scotland, Public Health Wales, Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, Public Health England and National Ambulance Service.

The full guidance can be found on the BAPM website: COVID-19 Pandemic - Frequently Asked Questions within Neonatal Services.

The flow charts from appendix 1 and 2 of the FAQs can be viewed below.

Management of the baby at delivery flow chart
Neonatal unit admission flow chart
Updates

- Updates in this version (10 September 2021) - This page no longer details full guidance but rather links to updated version on BAPM website.
- 7 September 2021 - Neonatal Unit admissions flow chart updated
• 26 March 2021 - Updates added around isolation periods, parent testing, visiting and face masks for parents and visitors

Downloads
NHS Scotland COVID-19 leaflet for new mothers 993.17 KB
NHS poster: Coronavirus - Parent information for newborn babies 1.21 MB
Illness in newborn babies leaflet 1021.69 KB