

WeRISE Doulas COVID-19 Preparedness *Toolkit*



WERISE: BLACK BIRTH WORKERS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

What's included in this toolkit?

Key Concepts

- Facts about COVID-19
- How Doulas can continue to support their clients
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
- Hospital births
- What will happen if I give birth in a hospital or another birthing facility?

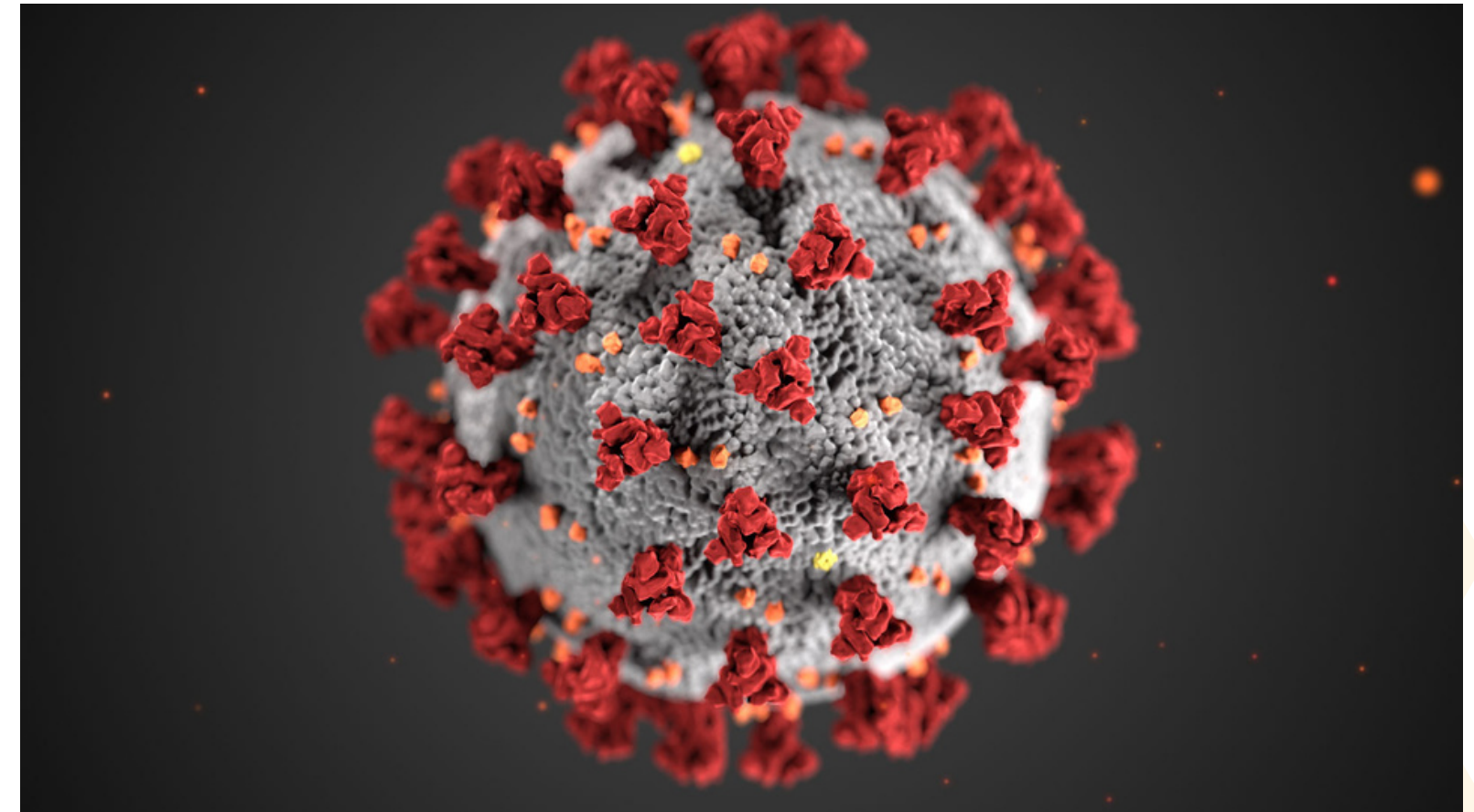
-



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new strain of a group of common viruses called coronaviruses. Coronaviruses cause mild to severe illness ranging from common cold symptoms to more severe diseases like SARS and MERS. It is spread from respiratory droplets via coughing or sneezing and can be transferred from contaminated surfaces when touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. COVID-19 symptoms range from mild to severe and may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

The most common symptoms include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea. Those who are pregnant are among the more vulnerable populations believed to be at a higher risk for severe illness if infected with COVID-19.





How can Doulas
support their
families?

Doulas in the hospital

It has been shown that Doulas help to improve birthing outcomes for both moms and babies when used as prenatal, labor/birthing, and postpartum support. Doulas help to support families with education, emotional and physical comfort, and advocacy regarding the birther's labor, delivery and infant care choices. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) have both recognized and support the important and beneficial role of a Doula during labor and recommend that Doulas be allowed to fully support moms in the hospital setting.

Meeting clients

Clients can and should be supported virtually via telephone and/or video conferencing (i.e. a password enabled Zoom call or another HIPAA compliant video conferencing platform) when in-person visits are not available due to medical concerns or not desired due to client concerns. Creating affirmations with your client to be used during labor, reinforcing ways for your client to keep safe at home and in the community regarding COVID-19, educating your client on changes that may be implemented in the birthing process, hospital or birthing facility due to COVID-19, and having at least monthly check-ins via telephone or video conferencing prior to birth are just a few of the ways to ensure your client is supported and you remain informed.

Personal Protection Equipment

When caring for clients who are asymptomatic and present as low risk for COVID-19 exposure, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends standard precautions. This includes the use of a face mask, a face shield or goggles, a gown and gloves. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WI DHS) also has recommendations for Home and Community-Based service providers when dealing with low risk clients. This includes the use of a face mask and gloves when going inside residences and/or working in close physical contact with those who are well. In addition to PPE, proper hand-washing for at least 20 seconds, cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and social distancing should also be implemented simultaneously.

Click below for more info on PPE

<https://rb.gy/alnxor>

<https://rb.gy/atbkhs>





What Doulas Should Know About Personal Protection Video Resources:

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with hospital infection control practices and PPE usage with these four video resources.

Hospital births

are they still happening?

Many hospitals and birthing facilities have strict policies when it comes to the presence and expectations of a Doula when supporting a client during this COVID-19 pandemic, if they are allowed at all. There have been many policies adopted in light of COVID-19 and these policies can vary widely between hospital systems. Check with your local hospital systems to find out what their specific policies are regarding Doulas and encourage your client to do the same. Your client should also notify their provider that they are working with a Doula prior to giving birth. If Doulas are allowed to be present during a client's labor, a mask and a temperature check upon arrival may be required for entry. You may not be able to leave prior to the

birth once you arrive so please plan for childcare and other outside obligations prior to going to the hospital to meet the client. You may also be required to leave very soon after the birth and unable to return during the remainder of the client's stay so be sure to discuss the immediate postpartum care plans with the client prior to going to the hospital as well. Communication options for while the client is still in the hospital should also be discussed and decided upon in advance. Some recommended items to pack in your Doula bag if you are attending a hospital birth during the COVID-19 pandemic include: a photo ID, proof of Doula status/certification papers (if available), extra snacks, extra cash, a small notebook and pen for notes, a



cell phone and charger, a personal size hand sanitizer, a change of clothes/shoes (for changing after leaving the hospital and before entering your personal vehicle), a small plastic bag or container (for transporting your changed clothes), and any personal items you may need during that time. Large bags and additional equipment that is hard to sanitize should be avoided to reduce the potential for contamination while at the hospital.