

Pregnancy and Newborn Care During COVID-19: Findings from the Family Strengths Research Study

Pregnancy and Newborn Care: Expecting parents and babies have unique needs during COVID-19. New parents face challenges getting baby supplies (such as formula, diapers, and wipes) and accessing prenatal and infant care. In addition, access to maternal and child care varies by neighborhood, racial and ethnic group, and income. Unfortunately, inequalities in care have continued through the COVID-19 pandemic.



How are Families Needing Pregnancy and Newborn Care Doing in Western PA? Based on [The Family Strengths Survey](#), among parents and caregivers who were currently pregnant or had children less than two years old, **one in four** indicated needing food assistance and nearly **30%** indicated needing baby supplies.

Among neighborhoods with high rates of early premature birth (babies born before 34 weeks):

- Parents/expecting parents reported needing food assistance and baby supplies **two times more** than neighborhoods with low rates of early premature birth.
- Parents/expecting parents reported needing cash assistance **three times more** than neighborhoods with low rates of early premature birth.

Families describe challenges of getting maternity and newborn care: *“Cannot get in person birthing classes. Also, would like breastfeeding classes and have not been able to secure those yet either. Wanted to get a doula for the birth, but..(I) fear if my husband will even be allowed in the room let alone a 2nd support person.”*

“We have a newborn...so I've been thinking a lot about how hard it is to not have visitors or helpers. He's a month old and has met literally only us (his two parents) and medical providers (when he was born and his pediatrician). I am stressed about not having our parents here to help and spend time with him.”

Healthy Start Can Help Support Healthy Pregnancies and Births During COVID-19. [Healthy Start](#) is offering virtual doula services to help increase birth support:

- Two prenatal virtual visits, labor and delivery support, a virtual postpartum visit, and phone calls;
- Expecting parents will receive a tablet to use in the hospital throughout labor;
- For families without another support person, in-person doula support will be offered on a case-by-case basis (with personal protective equipment).

For more information, visit www.healthystart.com, call or text 412-224-7040, or e-mail dhorsley@hsipgh.org



About this Study: The Family Strengths Study is a weekly survey of parents or expecting parents in Western PA. The study is a collaboration between UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP), University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), United Way, and the Allegheny County Health Department and Department of Human Services. This survey is part of the Pittsburgh Study and made possible through support from the CHP Foundation, Pitt Department of Pediatrics, The Grable Foundation, and The Shear Family Foundation. For more information, visit <https://www.pediatrics.pitt.edu/family-strengths-survey>

Who do I contact for more information?

For more information please contact: Family Strengths Survey team at PGHstudy@pitt.edu.

