

# Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Pregnancy, Birthing, Postpartum and Breastfeeding: A Systematic Review of Literature

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**Introduction:** Being pregnant during the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a lot of stress among pregnant women and their family as there is so much uncertainty. Pregnant mothers are facing first-times in their lives preparing for the delivery of their child in the middle of a pandemic. Our expectant parents are worried, exploring options for birthing and where they can give birth and who can accompany them. Most of women have an increased need for support and reassurance by all maternity care providers during pregnancy as well as during delivery and postpartum.

**Objective:** The aim of this systematic review is to evaluate the evidence of the perception and experience of the Covid-19 pandemic throughout pregnancy, birth, postpartum and lactation.

**Methodology:** A narrative review of published literature conducted to identify all articles relating to COVID-19 in pregnancy until Jan 30, 2021. Search terms included combinations of COVID-19 and pregnancy and were input into Medline, Cochrane, Web of Science, and PubMed. The peer-reviewed articles on experiences and perceptions, and how women are affected by Covid-19 and the current pandemic were included. Non-English language articles were not included.

**Results:** From 131 article, 15 included to this review. The findings derived from analysis were: “fear, anxiety and uncertainty”, “discomfort”, “satisfaction”, “lack of knowledge” and “lack of support” “surprise and frustration”, and “loneliness”. The expectant mothers had difficulty to get access to postpartum, especially breastfeeding services and help. Isolation had negative impact on mothers’ mental and psychological wellness. Dealing with a newborn without the physical support of family and friends was extremely hard to mothers. Many concerns were about work-life balance and a sense of frustration and feeling unable to focus on work-related tasks while working at home.

**Conclusion:** This review of literature suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has adverse outcomes for maternal psychological health, specially during the birth and postpartum. The birthing and postpartum parents should be supported by their networks and healthcare providers. These strategies for facilitating support to pregnant mothers and families should be considered by health care managers.