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MFM Guidance for COVID-19

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1 **Expert Review**

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3 **MFM Guidance for COVID-19**

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18

19 The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Healthcare
20 providers should prepare internal guidelines covering all aspect of the organization in order to have
21 their unit ready as soon as possible. This document addresses the current COVID-19 pandemic for
22 maternal-fetal medicine (MFM) practitioners. The goals the guidelines put forth here are two fold-
23 first to reduce patient risk through healthcare exposure, understanding that asymptomatic health
24 systems/healthcare providers may become the most common vector for transmission, and second to
25 reduce the public health burden of COVID-19 transmission throughout the general population. Box
26 1 outlines general guidance to prevent spread of COVID-19 and protect our obstetric patients.
27 Section 1 outlines suggested modifications of outpatient obstetrical (prenatal) visits. Section 2
28 details suggested scheduling of obstetrical ultrasound. Section 3 reviews suggested modification of
29 nonstress tests (NST) and biophysical profiles (BPP). Section 4 reviews suggested visitor policy for
30 obstetric outpatient office. Section 5 discusses the role of trainees and medical education in the
31 setting of a pandemic. These are suggestions, which can be adapted to local needs and capabilities.
32 Guidance is changing rapidly, so please continue to watch for updates.

33 **Box 1.** General guidance for outpatient obstetric practice management in setting of COVID19**General Obstetric/MFM COVID-19 recommendations**

- Prevention of spread should be #1 priority
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet; if not feasible, extended dividers, or other precautions
- Any elective or not-urgent visits should be postponed
- Each patient should be called to decide on need for next in-person visit and/or test
- Any visit that can be done by telehealth should be done that way
- No support person to accompany patient to outpatient visits unless they are an integral part of patient care

Testing specific recommendations:

- Pregnancy alone in the setting of new-flu like symptoms with negative influenza is sufficient to warrant COVID-19 testing; test especially if additional risk factors (e.g. older, immunocompromised, advanced HIV, homeless, hemodialysis etc.).
- Symptomatic patients are best triaged via telehealth in order to assess their need for inpatient support or supplemental testing; they in general should be presumed infected, and self-isolate for 14 days. In-person evaluation is not indicated if symptoms are mild.
- Utilize drive-through testing or stand-alone testing rather than in office testing where exposure can spread
- Symptomatic patients who nonetheless arrive to hospital or office should be managed as if they are COVID-19 positive; so immediately properly isolated in designated areas, with appropriate (e.g. N-95) mask on
- Designated separate areas should be created in each unit for suspected COVID-19 patients: Increase sanitization; Hand sanitizer available at front desk, throughout waiting area; Wipe down patient rooms after each patient; Wipe down waiting area chairs frequently

Practice-specific considerations and recommendations:

- Meetings should all be virtual/audio/video
- Keep some providers at home, as feasible with clinical duties. Especially those at highest risk, e.g. >60 years old, and/or co-morbidities.
- Practitioners should be **leaders** in their unit. COVID-19 leaders should be designated for each area (e.g. L&D, outpatient; ultrasound). Use this and other guidance (SMFM; ISUOG; ACOG; WHO; CDC; etc) and adapt to your specific situation. No guideline can cover every scenario. Use this guidance and clinical judgement to avoid any contact as much as feasible.

34

35 MFM = Maternal Fetal Medicine, L&D=labor and delivery, SMFM = Society of Maternal Fetal

36 Medicine, ISUOG = International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology, ACOG =

37 American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, WHO = World Health Organization, CDC =

38 Center of Disease Control

39 **Section 1: Outpatient obstetrical (prenatal) visits**

40 All new obstetrical intakes should be completed by telehealth / remotely unless the patient describes
 41 an urgent problem in which case she will be appointed as an urgent in-person visit. The standard
 42 timing for IN PERSON encounters in routine, uncomplicated pregnancies are described in Table 1.
 43 The hope is that necessary laboratory work and/or ultrasounds can be done at the same visit.
 44 Consideration may also be given to having laboratory work performed at lower volume satellite
 45 office sites where ability to accomplish social distancing is more easily attained, as feasible. Interim
 46 telehealth visits can be scheduled at provider discretion, e.g. at 16, 24, 34 weeks. Reschedule all
 47 OB visits using this paradigm. To minimize other in-patient visits, all patients should be instructed
 48 to obtain BP cuffs if feasible. Some health plans may cover the cost of blood pressure cuffs in the
 49 setting of the coronavirus pandemic. Consider all other visits by telehealth if feasible. Postpartum
 50 evaluation of cesarean wound healing or mastitis concerns may be optimized through use of photo
 51 upload options available in many electronic medical record patient portal programs.

52
 53 **Table 1:** Summary of suggested antenatal visit timing in setting of COVID-19 pandemic. Additional
 54 visits including follow up of diabetes control, hypertension, mood disorder etc may be done
 55 remotely with telehealth. NT: nuchal translucency, GBS: group B strep

Gestational Age	In-person OB Visit	Ultrasound	Comments
<11 weeks*			Telephone OB intake
11-13 weeks**	X	X (Dating/NT)	Initial OB labs
20 weeks	X	X (Anatomy)	
28 weeks	X		Labs/vaccines
32 weeks	X	X (if indicated)	
36 weeks	X	X (if indicated)	GBS/HIV screen
37 weeks-Delivery	X		Weekly

Postpartum

Telehealth

56 * Earlier scan may be indicated if at risk for ectopic;

57 **If viability previously established consider skipping 11-13 week scan and offering cfDNA.

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59 **Section 2: Scheduling of Obstetric Ultrasound**

60

61 Box 2 summarizes our suggested modifications to ultrasound timing. Table 2 outlines
 62 recommendations for specific antenatal indications. We recognize that these recommendations are
 63 specific to our practice environment. MFMs nationally and internationally should feel empowered
 64 to adjust as needed based on limitations in capacity and/or higher incidence of COVID, which may
 65 require further restrictions for both patient safety and public health. In addition to modifying
 66 ultrasound timing, the routine practice of face to face counseling for ultrasounds should be adjusted.
 67 Aside from major anomalies or new diagnosis (ie fetal growth restriction), in most cases ultrasound
 68 findings can be reviewed either over the phone/Telehealth, or in the setting of a normal routine
 69 ultrasound, by the OB provider at the next visit. Indeed, due to resource limitations many sites do
 70 only have remote communications for ultrasound finding, and this technology should be adapted
 71 widely to limit unnecessary patient contact, which protects both the patient from getting an
 72 infection and the provider from being a vector.

73

74 **Box 2:** *General principles for routine ultrasounds to maximize perinatal diagnosis and minimize*
 75 *exposure risk*

Dating Ultrasound:

- Combine dating/NT to one ultrasound based on LMP
- If ultrasound earlier in the first trimester (e.g., less than 10 weeks) is indicated due to threatened abortion, pregnancy of unknown anatomic location, may consider foregoing NT ultrasound and offering cell free DNA screening for those desiring early aneuploidy screening
- For patients with unknown LMP or EGA>14 weeks may schedule as next available

Anatomy Ultrasound (20-22 weeks)*

- Consider follow up views in 4-8 weeks rather than 1-2 weeks**
- Consider stopping serial cervical length after anatomy u/s if transvaginal cervical length \geq 35mm, prior preterm birth at >34 weeks
- BMI>40: schedule at 22 weeks to reduce risk of suboptimal views/need for follow up

Growth Ultrasounds

- All single third trimester growth at 32 weeks
- Follow up previa/low lying placenta at 34-36 weeks

84 NT: nuchal translucency, LMP: last menstrual period, EGA: estimated gestational age, BMI: body mass
85 index.

86 *Or earlier if desired based on state-specific termination laws;

87 **Consider forgoing follow-up ultrasound for one or two suboptimal views (e.g., l/s spine not seen well due
88 to fetal position but posterior fossa normal)

89

90 **Table 2:** Outline of common indications for growth ultrasound and suggested frequency/timing in
91 setting of COVID19 pandemic. Practice locations should adjust as needed based on site capacity
92 and risk of COVID exposure.

Indication	Gestational Age			Frequency			Comments
	24w	32w	36w	Once	q4w	q6w	
Pregestational diabetes mellitus						X	
Chronic HTN on medications						X	Once if no meds
Current preeclampsia/gestational HTN					X		
History of severe pre-eclampsia						X	
History of IUGR or SGA						X	
Current IUGR					X		
Sickle cell disease						X	
CKD						X	
Multiples - Mono/Di*					X		
Multiples -Mono/Mono					X		
Multiples -Di/Di					X		
GDMA2						X	
Lupus, no renal dysfunction						X	
Prior unexplained IUFD						X	
Organ Transplant						X	
Maternal Cardiac Disease						X	
Uncontrolled Thyroid Disease				X			
Current tobacco or substance use				X			
AMA (≥ 35 years old)				X			
Gestational diabetes A1				X			
Chronic HTN off medications				X			
Abnormal placentation				X			At 34-36 weeks
Uterine fibroids >5cm				X			

93

94 *HTN: hypertension; IUGR: intrauterine growth restriction; SGA: small for gestational age; TTTS:*
95 *twin-twin transfusion syndrome; CKD: chronic kidney disease; Mono-Di: monochorionic*
96 *diamniotic; Mono/Mono: monochorionic diamniotic; Di/Di: dichorionic diamniotic; AMA:*
97 *advanced maternal age; GDMA2: gestational diabetes-A2; IUFD: intrauterine fetal demise.*
98 ** consider every 2 week twin-twin transfusion screening*

99

100 **Section 3: Scheduling of Non Stress Tests / Biophysical profiles**

101 Table 3 illustrates how antenatal surveillance with NST/BPP may be modified in setting of
102 COVID19 pandemic and the actual increased risk patients may face in coming into office for 30+
103 minutes of testing. In general, we suggest the following principles:

- 104 • Twice weekly NSTs only for intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) with abnormal
105 umbilical artery Doppler
- 106 • Limit NSTs initiated <32 weeks
- 107 • If concurrent ultrasound, perform a BPP rather than an additional NST visit
- 108 • In lower risk patients, such as advanced maternal age 35-39 or BMI>40 with no other
109 comorbidities, consider kick counts instead of NST.

110 For patients with gestational hypertension/preeclampsia, plan weekly visit in office with daily blood
111 pressure checks at home. Weekly visit will include antenatal testing, blood pressure check
112 and labwork drawn in the office to minimize need for additional visits. These changes should be
113 relayed to patients with a discussion of the altered risk/benefit balance of coming to the office for
114 testing in the setting of a global pandemic.

115

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119

120 **Table 3:** Summary of common indications for non-stress tests and how we have modified frequency
 121 of testing in setting of additional risks related to COVID-19 exposure and transmission. Red text in
 122 COVID 19 column indicates changes to recommendations in setting of COVID, no change in
 123 practice suggested if this column empty

INDICATION FOR NST	Gestational Age to begin 1x/wk	Gestational age to begin 2x/wk	COMMENTS	COVID 19
AMA	36			Fetal kick counts instead of NST
CHOLESTASIS	DIAGNOSIS			
DECREASED FETAL MOVEMENT	DIAGNOSIS			One time only
PREGESTATIONAL DIABETES	32	36		Weekly only
GDMA2	32	36		Weekly only
CHRONIC HTN	32			36 weeks if no medications
GESTATIONAL HTN		DIAGNOSIS		Weekly with home BP monitoring
PRE-ECLAMPSIA		DIAGNOSIS		Weekly with home BP monitoring
CKD	32			
IUGR		DIAGNOSIS		Weekly with Doppler. Sub BPP when possible
ELEVATED DOPPLERS		DIAGNOSIS		
SLE	32			
FETAL ARRHYTHMIA	DIAGNOSIS			
MONO/DI TWINS	32			
DI/DI TWINS			Only if additional indication	
OBESITY/BMI<40	32			Fetal kick counts instead of NST
OLIGOHYDRAMNIOS	DIAGNOSIS			
POLYHYDRAMNIOS	DIAGNOSIS			Diagnosis or at 32 weeks if <32wk diagnosis. Only for AFI>30
PRIOR IUFD	32		1 wk prior to IUFD	
SICKLE CELL DISEASE	32			Kick counts if well controlled

SINGLE UMBILICAL
ARTERY

32

Fetal kick counts if
normal growth,
normal microarray

124

125 *AMA: advanced maternal age; GDMA2: gestational diabetes-A2; HTN: hypertension; IUGR:*

126 *intrauterine growth restriction; CKD: chronic kidney diseases; BP: blood pressure; NST: non*

127 *stress test; SLE: systemic lupus erythematosus; DI/DI: dichorionic diamniotic; Mono-di:*

128 *monochorionic diamniotic; IUFD: intrauterine fetal demise.*

129

130

131

132

133 **Section 4: Visitor policy for obstetric outpatient office**

134 Box 3 outlines general guidelines for visitors. In the setting of a pandemic, consider visitors as
135 something that does not benefit patient care but may harm other patients/providers. Exceptions may
136 be made when the visitor is critical for patient care, for example, for young patients coming with a
137 parent, or someone with developmental delay who relies on a support person to aid in medical
138 decision making.

139

140 **Box 3:** *Suggested visitor policy for outpatient offices*

General Outpatient Office Visitor Policy:

- There should be NO additional family/friend/partner in any outpatient appointment
- Patients asked NOT to bring children
- Visitor with symptoms at front desk check in WILL NOT be allowed in patient care areas and will be asked to return home.
- Patients may be asked to reschedule non-urgent care if they or their visitor are symptomatic

141

142

143 **Section 5: Involvement of trainees**

144 In setting of a COVID-19 and the significant risk of not only trainees' health, but additional
145 healthcare providers serving as a vector and using limited protective equipment, we suggest all non-
146 essential clinical personnel remain at home. This means any nursing, medical, sonography students
147 should not be in the office, any other observerships should be suspended. Additionally, in an
148 academic setting where an attending physician is supervising residents or fellows, multiple
149 providers providing face to face counseling should be limited.

150

151

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