

## Even during pandemic, childbirth safest in hospital, doctors' group says

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Having your baby in a hospital is the still the safest choice, even during

the coronavirus pandemic, updated guidelines from a leading pediatricians' group say.

"We recognize that women have different reasons for planning a [home delivery](#), such as cultural or religious beliefs—and right now, concerns over the coronavirus pandemic," guideline author Dr. Kristi Watterberg said in a news release from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

"We are providing information for physicians to share with expectant parents to help them understand the factors that increase the risks of home birth and recommend standards for [newborn care](#)," Watterberg added. "If a [medical emergency](#) does arise during birth at home, families should also be aware of the very real risk that emergency transport services could be unavailable due to the coronavirus response."

Planned home birth in the United States is associated with a twofold to threefold increase in [infant death](#), as well as increased risk of medical complications, the statement said.

A growing number of American women are giving birth at home. The increase is mostly in [white women](#), according to the AAP.

Women who are considering home birth should meet all of the following criteria: have a low-risk pregnancy; have certified personnel who will attend the birth and a pre-established network in case of transfer to a hospital; ensure that the care of infants born at home be consistent with that provided for infants born in a medical facility; and arrange for two care providers to be present at each delivery.

At least one of those care providers should have primary responsibility for the newborn and appropriate training, skills and equipment to perform full resuscitation of the infant, according to the Neonatal Resuscitation Program (an approach to newborn care developed by the

American Heart Association and the AAP).

Pregnant women with questions about hospital safety during the coronavirus pandemic should discuss their concerns with their doctors in advance, according to the guidelines. The policy statement was published online April 20 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on the [coronavirus pandemic](#).

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