



Information on the potential risk of SARS-CoV-2 for pregnant and nursing students (updated 3 June 2022 – still valid!) – Student information

FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Because of the novelty of the coronavirus, the scientific data on Covid-19 is still incomplete. Based on the current state of information, scientists cannot yet reliably confirm whether pregnant women are more likely to fall ill with Covid-19 or to what extent they are more likely to suffer a severe case of illness. One should consider the limited drug treatment options for pregnant women and their heightened risk of thrombosis. Furthermore, there is currently no reliable information on what effects an infection can have on an unborn child.

To avoid unnecessary complications, the same applies to vaccinated pregnant women and to women who have contracted Covid-19 and since convalesced.

Therefore, as you continue your studies, we recommend taking precautionary measures to protect yourself and your baby during your pregnancy in order to minimise your risk of infection as much as possible.

When students notify the Student Maternity Protection Coordination Office of their upcoming pregnancy, we normally evaluate their personal risk in the context of their academic activities. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, we have expanded this maternity protection measure to include an assessment of one's risk of contracting Covid-19. For in-person courses, the instructor will talk with you about what protective measures can be taken to allow you to participate. Decisions to implement protective measures must always be made on a case-by-case basis with respect to the specific, concrete situation on location. Participating in digital courses, on the other hand, comes at practically no risk.

Medical face masks (surgical masks) are generally suited for use by pregnant women. They can be worn for additional protection, but only insofar as they do not excessively burden the pregnant woman. FFP2 masks are known to place a physical strain on the wearer. Therefore, FFP2 masks should not be worn for extended periods of time. Should pregnant women be required to use FFP2 masks on occasion, the scope of usage should be described in detail and assessed accordingly in the risk assessment. The review should take into account the physiological changes that accompany pregnancy, e.g. increased effort to breathe, and the course of the pregnancy. We recommend seeking medical consultation on this matter.

If protective measures cannot reduce the potential risk of infection to an acceptable degree, then the student may not be allowed to carry out her study activities. In such cases, alternative study options should be offered so that the student's academic pursuits will not have to languish indefinitely.

For further information on health risks related to study, you can contact the [Occupational Health and Environment Protection Office \(StabAU\)](#).

If such measures cannot be arranged for whatever reason, you may claim compensation for disadvantages for completing required coursework and degree relevant examinations in accordance with the NRW Higher Education Act (*Hochschulgesetz*). Please contact the [Student Maternity Protection Coordination Office](#) for more information regarding this option.

FOR NURSING MOTHERS

Based on the current state of knowledge, nursing mothers are at no higher risk of contracting COVID-19 than any other person. Nonetheless, like all students, nursing mothers are required to observe the social distancing recommendations, hygiene rules etc.