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## *H1N1 Influenza Considerations for New Parents*

With the H1N1 influenza virus circulating in our community at this time, there are several important things to consider when deciding how to care for your new baby if you should become ill with an influenza-like illness.

- Infants are known to be at higher risk of severe illness from seasonal influenza virus infections. Based on this experience, infants also are considered to be at higher risk for severe illness from novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection.
- If you are ill with an influenza-like illness (fever of 100 degrees or more along with cough, sore throat or other respiratory symptoms), it is possible that you have H1N1 influenza and could give it to your baby.
- Your newborn is considered potentially infected with influenza if your delivery occurs during the two days before, or through seven days after, the onset of your illness.

When still in the hospital, if you are ill, your baby can be cared for in the Newborn Nursery if you choose. You also may room in with your baby using good infection control practices which include:

- Limit the number of visitors to you and your new baby.
- Have a healthy member of your family feed your baby

When you do hold your baby:

- Put on a clean gown.
- Wash or sanitize your hands very well before and after holding your baby.
- Put on a face mask.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have made recommendations to help guide you in the event that you are ill with influenza around the time your baby is born. Their recommendations include:

- 1) If you are ill, you should consider delaying close contact with your baby until:
  - You have finished 48 hours of antiviral medication, and;
  - Your fever is gone, and;
  - You can control your cough and secretions.
- 2) If possible, only adults who are not sick should care for your baby, including providing feedings.
- 3) Breast milk is advantageous for your baby. You can express or pump milk to give your baby even if you are on treatment with antiviral medications.
- 4) Antiviral medications are not recommended generally for babies under three months of age.