

Concerns of women

regarding pregnancy and childbirth during the COVID-19 pandemic

Please contact us at BabyTalk@kumc.edu or at 316-962-7933 if you need help finding resources.

Participants

114 women **ages 16-38** were surveyed in April and May of 2020 about their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sedgwick County.

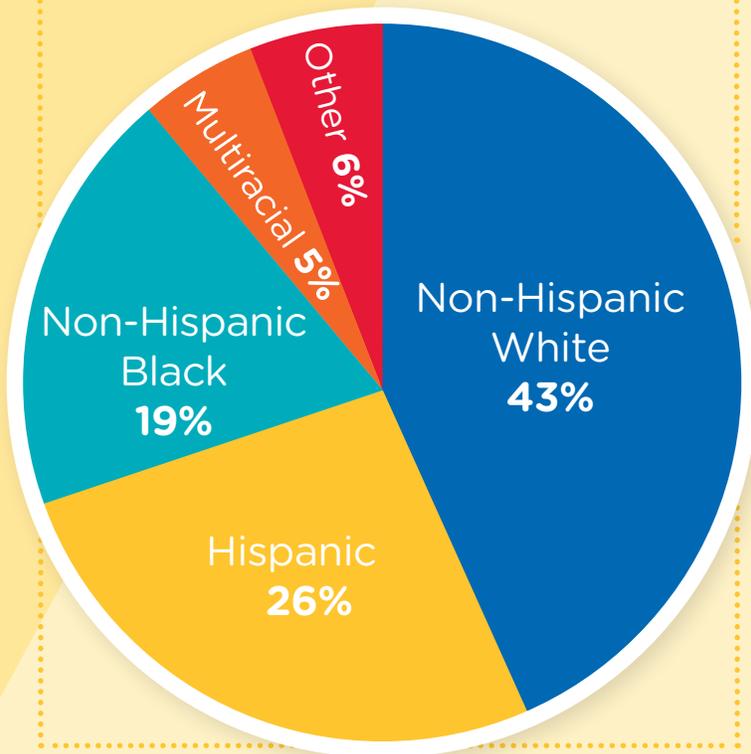


40%
were pregnant



60%
had an infant
10 months
old or less

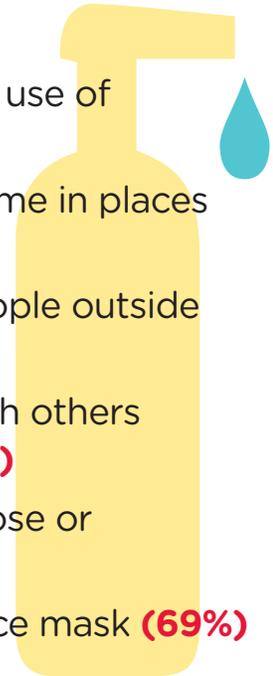
RACE/ETHNICITY



Behaviors to reduce the risk of COVID-19

Most women were very (**42%**) or somewhat (**42%**) concerned about COVID-19, although a few were not very or not at all concerned (**15%**). However, all (**100%**) made changes to try to protect themselves and their babies from COVID-19, such as:

- Frequent hand washing or use of sanitizer (**99%**)
- Reducing the amount of time in places with >10 people (**99%**)
- Reducing contact with people outside of own household (**98%**)
- Avoiding close contact with others who have symptoms (**97%**)
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth (**92%**)
- Purchasing or making a face mask (**69%**)



On March 25, 2020, a stay-at-home order was put into effect for Sedgwick County, Kansas. This order requested citizens only leave home for necessary activities, such as grocery shopping, going to and from work, caring for family or pets. Most women reported following the guidelines all (**61%**) or most of the time (**35%**), with a few only following some of the time or not at all (**3%**).

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Changes in employment and financial status due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Unemployment increased from **39%** to **60%**. Those reporting they were struggling to keep up with the cost of living nearly doubled from **26%** to **50%**.



Self-care ideas by participants



Despite these negative impacts of COVID-19, participants were able to describe self-care strategies such as focusing on things they can control, daily physical activity (e.g., walking, yoga), cleaning and organizing, and meditation. Some also mentioned limiting exposure to the news as a way to limit stress.



Changes in social support

A quarter of women (**24%**) said they lost social support because of COVID-19,

“No one comes to visit, and I can’t go visit anyone.”

including a decrease in support services.

“Appointments were cancelled for all my programs.”

Changes in mental health

Participants reported changes in mental status indicators related specifically to the COVID-19 pandemic (**82%**), including:

- Increased stress (**63%**)
- Increased anxious thoughts (**50%**)
- Changes in sleep patterns (**47%**)
- Reduced motivation (**46%**)
- Increased fearful thoughts (**40%**)
- Changes in appetite (**40%**)
- Racing thoughts (**36%**)
- Difficulty in focus and concentration (**36%**)
- Depressed mood (**28%**)
- Increased tearfulness (**20%**)

IDEAS TO INCREASE SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Reach out to family and friends on the phone or online. Consider scheduling regular times to connect.
- Don't be afraid to ask for what you need. Let people know how you are feeling and how they can help. People who care about you don't always know how to best support you.
- Visit with friends or family outside where you can social distance safely. Make sure everyone wears a mask!
- Connect with support groups online.