

Breastfeeding and COVID-19

Information from: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Should a mother with confirmed COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19 breastfeed her baby?

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. However, much is unknown about COVID-19. In limited studies on women with COVID-19 and another coronavirus infection, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), the virus has not been detected in breast milk; however, we do not know whether mothers with COVID-19 can transmit the virus via breast milk. **Even if the virus can not be transmitted via breast milk, it may still be transmitted to the baby during close exposure, like breastfeeding, due to mothers coughing or sneezing.** Whether to start breastfeeding, or continue breastfeeding should be determined by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers. (Per CDC last reviewed: February 19, 2020)

IN HOSPITAL

When feeding at the breast the mother should:

- Wash breasts off with mild soap and water
- Wash her hands before touching the infant
- Wear a face mask, if possible, while feeding at the breast
- Return infant to crib
- Remove mask (if used) and wash hands

When pumping breast milk, the mother should:

- Wash breasts off with mild soap and water
- Wash hands before touching any pump or bottle parts
- Pump breasts
- Label milk
- Have your nurse wipe down your pump after use with a Super Sani Cloth
- Call staff to retrieve expressed milk
- Have someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant

When disposable face masks NOT available:

- Cover mouth and nose with cloth bandana or handkerchief (use once and launder)
- Make a disposable mask with a folded paper towel, with rubber bands fastened on as ear loops (dispose after each use)

AT HOME

When feeding at the breast the mother should:

- Wash breasts off with mild soap and water
- Wash her hands before touching the infant
- Wear a face mask, if possible, while feeding at the breast
- Return infant to crib
- Remove mask (if used) and wash hands

When pumping breast milk, the mother should:

- Wash breasts off with mild soap and water
- Wash hands before touching any pump or bottle parts
- Pump breasts
- Pour expressed milk into clean bottles (mother not to touch outside of clean bottles)
- Clean pump and pump parts with soap and water
- Have someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant

When is it safe to stop these special precautions?

The decision to discontinue temporary separation and/or precautions is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with clinicians, infection prevention and control specialists, and public health officials. Considerations to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions include all of the following:

- Resolution of fever, without use of fever reducing medication
- Improvement in illness signs and symptoms
- 2 Negative COVID-19 laboratory test swab(s)