

# Breastfeeding during COVID-19

***Breastfeeding provides many benefits for mom and baby. It is safe to breastfeed and provide your baby with your pumped milk or donor milk. Your milk is safe and beneficial for your baby.***

## **Can COVID-19 pass to my baby through breast milk?**

So far, the virus has not been found in the breast milk of women with COVID-19. The limited studies on breastfeeding women with COVID-19 and other coronavirus infections have not detected the virus in breast milk. Currently, the primary concern is not whether the virus can be transmitted through breast milk, but rather whether an infected mother can transmit the virus through respiratory droplets during the period of breastfeeding. A mom with COVID-19 symptoms should take precautions like washing her hands before touching her baby and wearing a face mask while feeding.

Breast milk gives babies protection against many illnesses. It also is the best source of antibodies and nutrition for most babies. Talk with your health care provider about whether to start or continue breastfeeding.

## **Should I give formula or donor milk, to be on the safe side?**

It is actually safer to give your breastmilk – not formula or donor milk. Breastmilk contains one-of-a-kind antibodies that lower the chances that your baby becomes sick with COVID-19. All authorities, such as World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control, American College of Pediatrics, and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine recommend that breastfeeding should continue during this pandemic.

If a mother's milk is not available or not plentiful, donor milk is a great option. Formula is the next best and safe alternative. We recommend that you discuss options with your care team.

## **How can I be sure that donor milk is safe?**

It is understandable that you may be concerned. It is recommended that you only get donor milk from an official milk bank to assure that the milk is safe. Donor milk provided by our hospital comes from a milk bank that follows thorough screening and sterilization processes. We do not recommend using donor milk from unknown or private sources.

## **I am having problems with breastfeeding. What should I do?**

We recognize that every baby and mom is different so we offer resources and reassurance for all levels of breastfeeding experience – from those who have never breastfed or are struggling to moms who might just want additional support.

At our dedicated breastfeeding clinic, you'll receive assistance for yourself and medical care for your infant. We are offering virtual and in-person visits 5 days a week. Please call [804-828-CHOR \(2467\)](tel:804-828-CHOR) and our coordinator will determine whether an in-person or virtual visit will work best for you.

## **How can I lower the chances my baby is exposed to COVID-19?**

Wash your hands with soapy water or use an alcohol hand sanitizer before and after you breastfeed or pump. If pumping, make sure your pump parts are clean before each use. Wear a face mask if you have coronavirus symptoms. Right now, it's important to limit nonessential in-person visits. You can do phone calls and video chats. If you have to go out, follow social distancing parameters and consider wearing a mask (babies and toddlers under age 2 should not wear masks). The safety and well-being of you and your baby remain our priority and we are here to support you.

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Breastfeeding provides many benefits to mom and baby. It's safe to breastfeed, or provide your baby with your pumped milk or donor milk. These tips can help keep you and baby healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic:



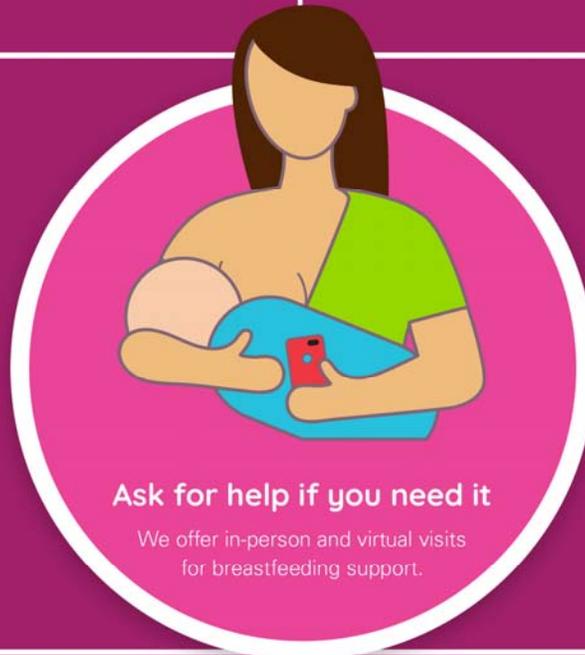
**Wash hands before breastfeeding or bottle feeding**



**Regularly clean breast pump parts and wipe down surface of pump**



**Avoid gatherings and crowds**



**Wear a mask if sick with coronavirus symptoms or if instructed by your provider**



**Avoid visitors to your home**

We know this is hard after having a baby. Ask family or friends to leave meals or gifts at your door. Visit from inside your door while visitors are outside, at least 6 ft away.



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