

Breastfeeding Your Baby During Coronavirus/COVID-19

This is all new and changing quickly so we don't know a lot about babies and coronavirus. In general pregnant and postpartum women and young children don't seem to be a higher risk of severe disease. Newborns might be different though and there is some evidence that they are more likely to get seriously sick. Think about it – this baby just learned to breathe a couple of days ago so something that hits the lungs is going to be hard. Their noses are tiny so if they get clogged it can make feeding really difficult. The smartest thing to do is protect your precious new family member as best you can.



Protect your baby – Even if you and those around you are well, wash your hands often and always before breastfeeding. Stay home and avoid visitors. Introduce your baby to friends and family by video chat instead.

Breastfeeding helps your baby stay healthy - Breastfeeding protects you and your baby in many ways - and keeping babies and young children healthy is more important now than ever. While we don't know if breastfeeding protects from COVID-19, in general breastfed babies are less likely to be sick from common infections.



Breastfeed your baby directly - Breastfeeding directly, at the breast, without bottles or pumps, minimizes the chances of contamination and maximizes the germ-fighting power of your milk.

You can breastfeed even if you are sick – Breastfeeding can continue even if you have COVID-19 or suspect that you may have it. While there isn't a lot of research, there is no evidence that the coronavirus is transmissible through breastmilk. Both the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization support COVID-19 positive women continuing to breastfeed.



Reducing risk when you are sick - Other than for breastfeeding, limit the amount of time you are in close contact with your baby and if possible and have a healthy caregiver look after your baby's other needs. Wash your hands thoroughly before breastfeeding and wear a mask, if possible, during breastfeeding. A surgical mask is best but if that isn't available, a cloth one is okay.

Look after yourself – It is hard to breastfeed when you are feeling unwell. Rest as much as you can. Keep hydrated and eat to keep your energy up. But also call your primary care provider (NP, doctor or midwife) or your local public health unit for advice on when you should be assessed, screened and/or tested.

