



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Breastfeeding Your Infant During Covid-19

## Caring for your baby while breastfeeding.

- Get the COVID-19 vaccine. Not only will it protect you, but the antibodies can be passed to your baby through your breast milk.
- The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the risks of passing COVID-19 to your baby.
- Close contact will help your baby flourish. Holding your baby skin-to-skin when possible is good for you and your baby. Relax and enjoy your baby.
- Wash your hands often and well with soap and water, and always before and after feeding and touching your baby. This keeps germs away and your baby safe.
- Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue, and then throw the tissue away and wash your hands.
- If you feel sick or think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, as an added precaution clean your breast area with soap and water before a feeding.
- Practise physical distancing with other people and avoid contact with others who are unwell.
- Frequently clean and disinfect all surfaces, especially high-touch areas like taps, kitchen surfaces, door knobs and your cellphone.



## Breast milk is our first traditional food and is the best option for infants, so keep going!

- Breastfeeding is recommended, even if you are sick with COVID-19.
- Breastfeeding can protect your baby against many illnesses because it helps strengthen their immune system. It also contains your Ancestors' DNA and strength – so pass that on to your baby and your future generations.
- COVID-19 has not been found to pass through breast milk but your antibodies do! This includes your COVID-19 vaccine antibodies.
- Breastfeed often to build up and maintain a good milk supply for your baby.

### **Keeping your breastfeeding supplies clean and safe.**

- Wash your hands before touching your breast pump and before you hand express.
- If using a breast pump, clean and disinfect all pump parts that come into contact with human milk.
- If using bottles for breast milk, take extra care to keep the bottles safe for your baby: wash each piece with soap and water and then place all parts in boiling water for two minutes to sterilize them.

### **Caring for yourself while you are breastfeeding.**

- It is important for you to be healthy and strong to care for your baby and to make milk. The COVID-19 vaccine is your strongest protection from serious illness.
- Get enough rest. Sleep when the baby sleeps.
- Practise healthy ways of coping with stress: perhaps going outside for fresh air, talking to someone, exercising, doing breathing/relaxation exercises, or listening to music.
- Drink enough fluids and eat well.
- Connect with others through phone and video calls.
- If you are sick (e.g., cough, sore throat, fever, sneezing), wash your hands often, and use a mask when feeding and any time you are holding, caring for your baby or near your baby. Replace your mask with a new one if it gets wet or soiled.

### **It takes a community to support a family with a new baby.**

- You and your baby are learning to breastfeed together and every breastfeeding experience is unique.
- Reach out to people who have breastfeeding knowledge in your community, like Elders, Aunties or others. You can also ask your community health nurse, doula, doctor, midwife or nurse practitioner. They are there for you and would love to help support you.
- First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day: call 1-855-344-3800 to speak to a doctor.
- Maternity and Babies Advice Line: contact your local healthcare provider for access.
- Lactation consultants (LC) specialize in breastfeeding. Your community health care provider may be able to make arrangements with an LC or public health unit to provide you with additional breastfeeding support.
- Need help learning how to increase your milk supply or keeping a good supply? Ask for help. Sometimes it can be challenging, but there are people and resources to support you.

*You are doing a great job! Remember that it is okay to need help and ask for help.*

**Taken from Baby's Best Chance 7th edition 2019.**

Put this in your basket of teachings to help you on your breastfeeding journey and support the wellness of you and your baby.