

BREASTFEEDING YOUR INFANT DURING COVID-19

This resource is meant to answer your questions about breastfeeding your infant and to help settle concerns you may have.

Currently, there is no approved vaccine to protect against coronaviruses. To avoid COVID-19 infection, women who are pregnant and/or have infants / children, should take the same precautions as the general public.

For more information, check out [Baby's Best Chance 7th edition 2019](#), which has over 10 pages on breastfeeding.

Infant feeding	
Should I still breastfeed?	<p>Breastfeeding is still the best option for infants, <i>so keep going!</i></p> <p>Women <i>can</i> breastfeed if they have COVID-19 or are sick (see next section), as COVID-19 does not pass through breastmilk. You can continue breastfeeding with some special precautions. Breastfeeding can protect your baby against many other illnesses because it helps to strengthen your baby's immunity.</p> <p>Remember, breastfeed often, to help keep your milk supply adequate for your baby.</p> <p>Practice the same habits that everyone is asked to follow: Wash hands frequently, avoid close contact with people who are sick, practise social/physical distancing, do not touch your face (eyes, nose and mouth) with unwashed hands, cough and sneeze into your bent elbow.</p>
How do I keep my baby safe while feeding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Close contact will help your baby to thrive, so hold them during feeds -- using skin to skin when possible, and share a room with them. ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water before touching your baby (before and after feeds). ✓ Wear a face mask near the baby if you are sick. ✓ Wash your hands before touching your breast pump and before you hand express. Sanitize your pump and its parts after every use. See next point. <p>If using bottles for breastmilk: take extra care in sterilizing and keeping the bottles safe for your baby. Wash each piece with soap and water and then place in boiling water for two minutes.</p>
What do I need to do to take care of myself while I am breast-feeding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ During these challenging times, it is important to look after yourself. You need to be healthy and strong to care for your baby and to make milk. ✓ Get enough rest. ✓ Practice the things that help you cope 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. <p>Connect with others through phone and video calls.</p>
How can I keep a good milk supply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Spend as much time as possible skin to skin with your baby in a calm environment. ✓ Breastfeed or pump more frequently, especially at the beginning when you and baby are learning; aim for at least every two to three hours, or sooner if baby is showing signs of wanting to feed. ✓ Ensure baby is effectively emptying your breasts so as to maintain your supply (wide-open mouth, so part of your breast is in the baby's mouth, not just your nipple; see and

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	<p>hear suck and swallow, with jaw movement not just lips moving). Learn how your baby communicates these to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increasing or maintaining your breastmilk supply during this time will provide your baby with immunity and protection.
<p>How do I increase my milk supply?</p>	<p>Try adding an extra pumping session. You may see an increase in supply after two to four days. The overall aim is to remove more milk from the breast in a 24-hour period. You can do this two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pumping after a feed for extra stimulation and milk removal (aim for two to five minutes after the last drops of milk). ✓ Pumping between sessions to increase frequency of breast emptying (keep the session short so as not to empty your breasts too much (which would mean a slower flow of milk for baby at next feeding)). <p>Try switching breasts more often: Start on one side, feed for three minutes (or until baby is no longer actively drinking). De-latch your baby. Switch your baby to the other side. Breastfeed for three minutes. Switch back to the other side. Repeat until baby is done.</p> <p>Make sure you are eating and drinking enough – you need more food (calories) than you did when you were pregnant to produce milk. So eat often and drink a glass of water each time you breastfeed.</p> <p>Consider taking herbs/substances known to increase milk production (e.g., galactagogue). Herbal remedies (no prescription) or medications (by prescription) will only work if you take them while actively trying to build your supply at the same time (meaning stimulating the breast and removing milk).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Talk to your community health nurse, CHR, doula, doctor, midwife, or nurse practitioner: they will be able to give you more details. ✓ Talk with a traditional knowledge keeper who may have suggestions.
<p>Need help, need to talk to someone?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">You are doing a great job, it is OK to ask for help and to need help.</p> <p>Breastfeeding can sometimes be challenging, and it may be even more so during the present situation. If this is your first baby, you and your baby are learning to breastfeed together.</p> <p>Every baby and breastfeeding experience is different, so even if you are breastfeeding your second or third baby, things may be different.</p> <p>Reach out to people who have breastfeeding knowledge like your community health nurse, CHR, doula, doctor, midwife, nurse practitioner for help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lactation consultants (LC) specialize in breastfeeding. Check with your community health care provider who may make arrangements with an LC or public health unit for additional breastfeeding support.