

Breastfeeding during the Current Health Crisis

Women should talk with their doctor or other health care provider about breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can use the information on this page to talk to your doctor about what is best for you and your baby.

For Healthy Women:

- Breastfeeding is good for your baby.
- Breast milk helps keep babies from getting sick from many things.
- If you are COVID-negative, usual birthing practices, such as delayed cord clamping, skin-to-skin care, breastfeeding, and rooming-in, do not need to change.
- If you are breastfeeding now and want to make more milk, use the Minnesota WIC Directory to get help from WIC people near you.
- If you are breastfeeding now and are thinking of stopping, you may want to keep breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Giving birth if you have COVID-19

- You can practice skin-to-skin care in the delivery room while wearing a mask.
- Breast milk can protect new babies from infection.
- You can stay in the same room with your healthy newborn after the birth, according to normal practice where you have your baby.
- When you're not breastfeeding, stay at least 6 feet away from your baby as much as you can while you are in the hospital after the birth.
- Always wash your hands well and wear a mask when breastfeeding and caring for your baby.
- If you do not want to breastfeed your baby, you can express your breast milk, so that someone who does not have COVID-19 can feed it to your baby. Always wear a mask and wash your hands well before you express your breast milk.
- You do not need to leave the hospital early to lower the risk of COVID-19 infection. Leaving early may make it harder to get off to a good start breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding if you have COVID-19

- Breast milk has antibodies that protect infants from infection. Breast milk is unlikely to give COVID-19 to infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports breastfeeding as the best choice for feeding infants.
- If you are sick and choose to breastfeed:
- Wear a mask and wash your hands before each feeding.
- If you have someone healthy who can take care of the baby, stay at least 6 feet away from your baby between feedings.
- If you are sick and want to express your breast milk to feed to your baby:
- A mother's milk is safe and important for her baby.
- Express your breast milk as many times as your baby eats, or at least six to eight times a day.
- Wear a mask when you express your milk.
- Wash your hands, breasts, breast pump parts, and baby bottles before you express breast milk.
- Clean your breast pump after each use. Learn [How to Keep Your Breast Pump Kit Clean: The Essentials](#).
- If possible, have someone who does not have COVID-19 feed the expressed milk to your baby.
- If you feed the expressed milk to your baby, always wear a mask and wash your hands first.
- If you want to go back to breastfeeding your baby after you are no longer sick, you can get help. Ask your health care provider or ask WIC where you can find help.

COVID-19 vaccine recommendations during breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding parents should be offered the vaccine after talking about the risks and benefits with their health care provider.
- Based on similar vaccines, the risk of serious illness from getting sick with COVID-19 is greater than the small relative risk from the vaccine.

- Recent reports have shown that breastfeeding parents who have received COVID-19 vaccines have antibodies in their milk, which could help protect their babies.