

HOW TO SAFELY BREASTFEED IF YOU HAVE COVID-19

We don't know for sure if mothers with COVID-19 can spread the virus to babies in breast milk, but based on what we do know, this is unlikely.



If You Have COVID-19 and Choose to Breastfeed

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before breastfeeding.
- [Wear a mask](#) while breastfeeding AND whenever you are less than 6 feet away from your baby.
 - » Do not put a face shield or mask on your baby. A face shield or mask could increase the risk of [sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\)](#) or accidental suffocation and strangulation.



If You Have COVID-19 and Choose to Pump or Express Breast Milk by Hand

- Use your own breast pump (do not share a breast pump).
- Wear a mask while pumping.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching any pump or bottle parts.
- [Clean your pump](#) after you use it, every time.
- If possible, have someone who lives with you and is vaccinated feed the pumped breast milk to the baby. Make sure they do not have COVID-19 and are not [at increased risk](#).
- Any caregiver living with you might have been exposed, and should wear a mask when they are within 6 feet of the baby for the entire time you are in [isolation](#)* for COVID-19, and during their [quarantine](#)**.

* Isolation refers to keeping someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home.

**Quarantine refers to keeping someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others.



Breastfeeding if You Are Separated from Your Newborn

If you have COVID-19, you may choose to temporarily separate from your newborn to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to your baby. However, you may find it hard to start or continue breastfeeding. There are steps you can take that can help build your milk supply:

- Pump or feed every 2-3 hours (at least 8-10 times in 24 hours, including at night), especially in the first few days. This signals the breasts to produce milk and prevents blocked milk ducts and breast infections.
- If you are unable to establish milk production or have to temporarily stop breastfeeding for any reason, consider getting help from a [lactation support provider](#).

- **COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are breastfeeding.** COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from getting sick even after you have had COVID-19. In addition, everyone who is ages 18 and older should get a [booster shot](#).



cdc.gov/coronavirus