



Novel Coronavirus Breastfeeding Information

Information from World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and Dr. Newman – Pediatrician

What is the Novel Coronavirus?

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

How is the Coronavirus spread?

The virus is transmitted through direct contact, respiratory droplets like coughing and sneezing, and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus. It is not yet known how long the virus survives on surfaces, but simple disinfectants can kill it.

What are the symptoms of novel coronavirus?

Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties.

How can you avoid the risk of infection?

1. Wash your hands frequently using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
2. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
3. Avoid close contact with anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms
4. Go to the doctor if you have a fever, cough or feel that it is difficult to breathe
5. Avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals

Breastfeeding Mothers Exposed or Infected with Coronavirus

All mothers or babies with symptoms of fever, cough or difficulty breathing, should seek medical care **early**.

Other than being “new”, there is nothing particularly special about this virus and the same principles apply as with other viruses.

Mothers or babies who have been exposed to Coronavirus should continue breastfeeding. Mothers and babies spend time TOGETHER. They are exposed to viruses and other pathogens TOGETHER. When either the mother or the baby is exposed to a virus, there is an incubation period before the onset of symptoms. In other words, the mother or baby are already infectious without knowing they are sick or feeling sick. **Breastmilk with its hundreds of immune factors (not just antibodies) are present to protect the baby.**

Considering the benefits of breastfeeding and the insignificant role of breastmilk in the transmission of other respiratory viruses, mothers should continue breastfeeding.

Precautions should be taken as there is a risk of transmission from mother to infant through respiratory droplets and direct contact, as well as indirectly through contaminated surfaces. Wear a mask when feeding your child, wash hands before and after feedings, and clean/disinfect contaminated surfaces.

If you are too ill to breastfeed, you should express your milk and give it to your child in a clean cup or bottle and continue to follow infection prevention methods.