CARING FOR YOUR NEW BABY

DURING COVID-19

Returning home with a newborn is a big adjustment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may feel that your support options are limited. It is important to stay connected with family and friends. Instead of in-person visits, you may need to connect with video calls.

You may worry about protecting yourself and your baby, especially during COVID-19. It is okay to have these concerns. There are ways to limit exposure by avoiding unnecessary public contact, planning ahead, and asking for help with some tasks.

Love your baby, keep baby close, and respond to their need for food, love, and comfort. These are all essential for baby's health, well-being, and development. This will also help your mental and emotional health.

This resource is not intended to replace medical guidance from your doctor, healthcare provider, or emergency medical services.

MI RESILIENCE

Resources For Baby & Caregivers

All Babies Cry
childrenstrustma.org/our-programs/all-babies-cry

Keeping Kids Safe
safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/home_safety_checklist.pdf

De-stressing Your Family
commonsensemedia.org/blog/help-your-family-de-stress-during-coronavirus-uncertainty

Fathers' Mental Health
nichq.org/insight/promoting-fathers-mental-health-during-childrens-early-childhood

Maternal and Infant Health
Michigan.gov/miheip

Michigan Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
Michigan.gov/WIC

Michigan Home Visiting Programs
MIHomeVisiting.com

Stay Home - Unless It Is Essential

If you must go out:

- Wear a cloth face covering in public. Be sure it covers nose and mouth.
- Keep the outing short and only for essential needs. Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Avoided crowded locations.
- Clean hands frequently by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds, if water is not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes.

If you must bring your baby:

- Cover the infant carrier (not the baby) with a light blanket.
  - This protects baby, but allows them to breathe comfortably.
  - Remove the blanket when your baby is not in direct view - this includes in the car. Check on baby often.
- Never put a face covering or mask on your baby or any child under two years old.
- Never leave your baby or child alone in a car.

When you return home:

- Immediately wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more. Then wash your baby's and/or children's hands.
- Remove shoes before entering your home, or leave at the door/entryway.

Check In With Your Baby's Doctor

- Call your baby's doctor with any questions or concerns. While in person visits may be limited, phone call and video calls are available.
- Schedule and attend your baby's first appointment and recommended well-child visits, include receiving the recommended vaccines to best protect your baby.
- Call your doctor's office before your appointment - to learn about their guidelines for entering the building, where to wait and other important instructions.

Five Ways To Accept Help & Stay Connected

Don't be afraid to ask for help!

Food and meal delivery:

- If available, try grocery services that drop off to your door or use curbside pickup.
- Friends or family may help with shopping for food or meals. Have them deliver to your door or porch, but keep social distance.

Have a conversation through a closed window, or in the driveway 6 feet apart.

Talk to family and friends through virtual get-togethers.

Join parent forums or community groups with online connections for support and friendship.

Feeding Your New Baby

Breastfeeding

Breast milk can help protect your baby against many infections, and they will be less likely to have severe symptoms when they get sick. There is no evidence that a mother can pass the virus to her baby through breast milk and breastfeeding. The numerous benefits of breastfeeding greatly outweigh the low risks of transmission and illness associated with the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, breastfeeding is recommended as the ideal way to feed your baby during and after the pandemic.

Formula Feeding

If you are thinking about formula feeding your new baby, consider offering as much breast milk as you can; this may help boost baby's ability to resist infections. If you are able to express or pump, this is another way to offer some breast milk to your baby, even if nursing is not successful. You can give both breast milk and formula if needed. If breastfeeding is not possible, prepare infant formula correctly (by following the directions on the can) and sterilize bottles and nipples. If you are not sure which infant formula to feed your baby, ask your pediatrician.

Making Sure Your Baby Is Getting Enough To Eat

- Newborns should nurse/be fed 8-12 times in 24 hours. Small stomachs need frequent feedings.
- Wet Diapers: Your baby should have six or more wet diapers in 24 hours by the time he is four days old.
- Dirty Diapers: Poops should be yellow to green in color by day five and the size of a quarter or larger. You should see 3-4 dirty diapers in 24 hours by day four.

Feeding Your Baby If You Are Sick

Take precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19 to your baby by washing hands before and after touching your baby, cleaning and disinfecting any surfaces you touch, cleaning infant feeding equipment before and after use, and practicing respiratory hygiene (by avoiding coughing or sneezing on the baby and wearing a mask or cloth face covering).

Learn more about your pregnancy during COVID-19
michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Pregnancy_Guide_691446_7.pdf

Learn about breastfeeding your baby during COVID-19
michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Breastfeeding_During_COVID-19_691443_7.pdf

Safe breast milk storage
cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm

Newborn Fussiness

Fussiness usually peaks between two weeks and two months. Make sure baby is fed 8-12 times in 24 hours, and has a clean and dry diaper and comfortable, clean clothing. Try a swaddle or sleep sack.

- **Coping with a new baby during COVID-19** healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/Pages/Tips-for-Coping-with-a-New-Baby.aspx
- **Tips for keeping you and your baby calm** michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71548_57836-336176--,00.html

When parents or caretakers of newborns become very stressed, exhausted, and feel at the end of their rope, sometimes they feel there is nothing they can do to help their child and may be tempted to shake their baby. Never shake or physically respond to your newborn. If you have attended all their needs and have tried soothing techniques, lay them gently on their back in their safe sleep space and take a few moments to step away from the crying.

This is temporary and the most stressful part of newborn-hood, but the crying will stop. Feelings of frustration, isolation, and exhaustion are very common for parents of newborn babies. If you are feeling these frustrations, try a grounding technique, use a mindfulness practice or reach out to a support person in your life. Find mindfulness techniques on page 5.

If you are worried about harming yourself or your baby, taking your own life, or are in crisis call 911 and seek immediate care.

Crisis counseling 24/7 if you're feeling distress:

- National Disaster Distress Helpline
  1-800-985-5990
- Michigan Crisis Text Line
  Text RESTORE to 741741

Immediate support 24/7 for thoughts of suicide:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  1-800-273-8255 or Text TALK to 741741

Infant Safe Sleep

- Adopt safe sleep practices for every nap and night-time sleep.
- Place baby on their back - in a crib, bassinet or pack-n-play every sleep.
- Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet.
- Keep baby's sleep space clutter free - NO pillows, blankets, bumpers, stuffed animals or toys.
- Do not cover baby's face or head (includes caps and hats) when sleeping.
- Avoid overheating - your baby should be dressed for the space he or she is in. If you think your baby is cold, dress him or her in a footed sleeper or a sleep sack right for their size and age.

Top 3 Ways To Keep Your

Baby Sleeping Safe

To avoid deadly sleep situations, your baby should sleep:

ALONE
On his or her BACK
In a CRIB or PACK-N-PLAY

Simple Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness is one way to lessen the effects of stress – emotionally and physically. These techniques promote being present, in the moment, and mindful.

Sit outside in the sun. Feel the heat of the rays on you. Appreciate how far the rays have traveled just to reach you.

Walk around. Feel as much as you can - notice the grass, pebbles, or soft carpet under your feet.

Deep breathing. Take long, slow breaths at the top of the hour, or set a reminder on your phone throughout the day.

Look at the night sky. Appreciate how delicate the stars and moon appear. Admire the twinkling lights - maybe notice a satellite or shooting star.

Sit quietly. Feel the breath coming and going from your chest, through your nose. Feel how the breath is cool as you inhale and warm as you exhale.

Write in a journal. Write down happy moments you can look back on when you're feeling anxious or stressed. Acknowledge the appreciation you feel for the things around you.

Grounding Technique

A grounding technique can help decrease anxiety and anger when you are feeling overwhelmed.

Think 5-4-3-2-1 as you notice:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste

Try the free app for meditation, sleep, and movement exercises.

Headspace.com/mi