

# BREASTFEEDING DURING COVID-19



## The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the low risk of COVID-19 virus transmission

- Breast milk can help protect your baby against many infections, and they will be less likely to have severe symptoms if they do get sick.
- Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most babies and always available without needing extra supplies.
- If you were thinking about formula feeding your new baby, consider offering as much breast milk as you can; this may help boost your baby's ability to fight infections.
- Hormones released during breastfeeding can help ease stress and anxiety.

## Can I breastfeed my baby if I have COVID-19?

**Yes! Breast milk is still the best source of nutrition for baby.**

- Always wash your hands before and after breastfeeding.
- Wear a mask or cloth face cover when you're near your baby to keep respiratory droplets from getting on them.
- If you're too unwell to breastfeed, consider asking someone who does not have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) to provide breast milk in other ways (using expressed breast milk or donor breast milk). You can restart breastfeeding when you feel well enough to do so.
- Protect breast milk supply by hand expression or pumping. Putting nursing on hold could decrease milk production.
- **If providing breast milk is not possible**, prepare infant formula correctly (follow directions on the can) and sterilize bottles and nipples. If you are not sure which infant formula to feed your baby, call the baby's doctor for support.

## FACTS

Breastfeeding is good for the health of both baby and mother.

The virus has not been detected in breast milk.

There is no evidence that a mother can pass on the virus to her baby through breast milk.

Learn more about pregnancy during COVID-19 [michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Pregnancy\\_Guide\\_691446\\_7.pdf](https://michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Pregnancy_Guide_691446_7.pdf)

Learn about caring for your new baby during COVID-19 [michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Newborn\\_Guide\\_691445\\_7.pdf](https://michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Newborn_Guide_691445_7.pdf)

**STAY WELL**  
Michigan.gov/StayWell

## What should I do if someone in my family or household is sick?

Keep breastfeeding! It will help protect baby if people around them are sick. Keep baby close by holding them skin-to-skin. If possible, keep yourself and baby more than 6 feet away from the person who is sick. Have the person who is sick wear a mask or cloth face covering when near the baby.

## How can I tell if my baby is getting enough to eat?

It is normal to worry if your baby is getting enough milk. Most women make plenty of milk. As long as you're feeding your baby often (8-12 times each day), you probably don't have anything to worry about.

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

### Other positive signs after breastfeeding:

- Your breasts may feel softer.
- Your baby should seem content.

## What causes low milk supply?

Limiting baby's time at your breast, skipping a feeding, or feeding formula or solid food instead of breast milk is a common cause of low milk supply.

## Breastfeeding Resources

You can always contact your healthcare provider, birthing hospital, or a community breastfeeding group if you have breastfeeding questions or concerns.

- **Breastfeeding Warmline:**  
833-MIWICBF (833-649-4223) Daily 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- **To find local birth and breastfeeding advocacy:**  
Email [info@mibreastfeeding.org](mailto:info@mibreastfeeding.org) or call 734-465-6559
- **Trusted online resources:**
  - [wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov](http://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)
  - [kellymom.com](http://kellymom.com)

## Mental Health Resources

**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 if you're having thoughts of suicide:**

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

## Signs of a good latch

- The latch is comfortable and pain free.
- Make sure baby's head, neck, and spine are aligned with your body, so that baby's body is not twisted.
- Baby's chin touches your breast.
- Baby's mouth opens wide around your breast, not just the nipple.
- Baby's lips turn out.
- Baby's tongue cups under your breast.
- You hear or see swallowing.
- Baby's ears move slightly.

## Having trouble getting a good latch?

- Move to a quiet, calm place.
- Hold your baby skin to skin. While both you and baby are undressed, hold baby against your chest.
- Let your baby lead. Support baby's neck, shoulders, and hips with your hands.
- Offer your breast, but let baby find your nipple on their own.

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