

Note:

The above-mentioned recommendations are subject to change based on latest updates by scientifically proven researches about breast-feeding in mothers who are infected with COVID-19 virus



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Breast Feeding & COVID-19

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All doctors agree on the importance of breast-feeding for the well-being of the baby. The mother's milk is rich in all essential dietary elements that are necessary for the baby. Breast-feeding is also efficient against infectious diseases because it has antibodies that strengthen the baby's immune system.

So far studies have not proven that COVID-19 can be transmitted from a lactating mother to her suckling baby.

The mother's amino acids, placenta and milk have all tested negative for COVID-19 antibodies.

However, the risk is still high for transmitting COVID-19 virus infection from an infected or suspected to be infected mother to the baby through air-borne droplets when touching or being around the baby.

A pregnant woman who is COVID-19 negative will undergo normal delivery procedures and can lactate normally.

Ministry of Health and King Faisal Specialist Hospital breast-feeding recommendations for COVID-19 positive and suspected COVID-19 positive mothers:



After delivery:

- COVID-19 positive or suspected positive mothers will be separated from the newborns until the mother has completely recovered or tested negative for COVID-19 virus.
- During the mother's isolation period, the baby will be placed in the PICU for observation and supervision from the infectious diseases doctors.
- The baby will be tested for COVID-19 24 hours after PICU admission.
- The baby will be discharged from PICU once proven healthy and negative for COVID-19 virus infection.



Breast-feeding:

- COVID-19 positive or suspected positive mothers will not be allowed to breast-feed in order to eliminate the risk of transmitting the infection from the mother being around the baby until she recovers or tests negative for COVID-19

- Milk to be pumped out of the mother by a healthy person. The milk can be kept in the fridge for 3 days and 6 months in the freezer.
- A healthy person but not the infected mother can feed the pumped milk to the baby.
- An infectious disease and OBGYN consultants will evaluate each case separately, weigh risks vs benefits for breast-feeding, and discuss the results with the mother.

Precautionary measures for pumping breast milk as per the Ministry of Health:

- Wash hands and breast well with soap and water.
- Wear a facemask.
- Clean and sanitize the pump with sterile wipes.
- Wash pump and its accessories with soap and warm water after each use.
- Sterilize surfaces where milk is collected.
- When pumping milk is undoable because of COVID-19 virus complications, stop and try again after recovery.

If both mother and baby test negative for COVID-19 virus infection, they can be brought together, all isolation precautionary measures will be lifted, and both can be discharged home