



## AAFP Statement on Breastfeeding and COVID-19

Breast milk provides protection against many acute and chronic illnesses. The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recommends breastfeeding for the majority of infants except in the case of certain medical conditions. Limited evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is spread via respiratory droplets, and to date, studies have not detected SARS-CoV-2 and similar coronavirus infections in breast milk. Therefore, the AAFP recommends promotion of breastfeeding and parent-infant bonding, and avoidance of parent-infant separation whenever possible.

If a parent has been exposed to COVID-19 but is asymptomatic, breastfeeding is a reasonable choice. The parent should use a mask and careful hand hygiene to reduce the risk of exposing the infant to respiratory secretions.

If a parent has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or was exposed and has symptoms, it is still reasonable to breastfeed and/or provide expressed milk for the infant. In addition to masks and handwashing, extra mechanisms to reduce exposure are suggested such as limiting contact with the infant outside of breastfeeding and the use of expressed breast milk fed to the infant by another household member who does not have COVID-19. If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, the parent should wash their hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and sanitize the pump after each use.

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