

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Breastfeeding during the Pandemic Information for Parents

April 21, 2020

### Reminder

#### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus, also known as SARS-CoV-2.

#### What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms are fever, a new or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, and sudden loss of smell without nasal congestion, with or without loss of taste. The disease can also cause death in adults, especially among the elderly and those with chronic disease.

#### How is COVID-19 spread?

The disease is primarily spread from person to person through droplets released into the air when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes in close proximity with someone else (less than two metres away). Transmission can also occur through direct hand contact with droplets from an infected person. Transmission through indirect contact (e.g., : with contaminated objects) is also possible, but is not the main way the disease spreads. So far, studies have found no indication that the disease can be transmitted through breast milk, including colostrum. What's more, breast milk contains antibodies that help your baby fight infections.

### What to expect during the pandemic

#### Getting ready to breastfeed

Given that group prenatal classes (in-person) are suspended during the pandemic, you can find useful information in *From Tiny Tot to Toddler: A practical guide for parents from pregnancy to age two*. The 2020 edition of the guide is available online. There are two key, complementary sections to help you get ready to breastfeed: Preparing to breastfeed and Breastfeeding your baby. There are also videos available to help you get ready.

- o [Making It Easier to Latch On](#)
- o [Breastfeeding Positions](#)
- o [What to Do When It Hurts](#)
- o [How to Express Milk](#)

Don't hesitate to raise any questions you have about breastfeeding preparation at your pregnancy checkups.

#### Hygiene precautions

It is recommended that you wash your hands thoroughly before and after breastfeeding.

## Breastfeeding after delivery

Skin-to-skin contact and rooming-in are recommended to facilitate breastfeeding. At the birthing unit or birthing centre, the health care providers will be available to coach and guide you. The *From Tiny Tot to Toddler* guide has key information to [help you initiate breastfeeding](#).

## Breastfeeding at home

Once you are back home, a CLSC nurse will call you to check in and offer breastfeeding support if you need it. It is important to follow the current social distancing and hand hygiene recommendations after you return home. This will help protect your baby.

At any time, if you have more questions or need help with breastfeeding issues, you can consult a nurse, doctor, midwife or other health professional by phone or videoconference. In-person appointments will be scheduled if the situation requires it.

There are [numerous community breastfeeding support groups](#) that provide phone support. Private services offered by [lactation consultants](#) are also available.

## Learning more about breastfeeding and overcoming the challenges

For more information, see the [Fact Sheet for Nursing Mothers](#) as well as the *From Tiny Tot to Toddler* guide, which has detailed information in the section [Breastfeeding problems and solutions](#).

## COVID-19

Mothers and fathers who test positive for COVID-19 will receive support and guidance from public health professionals. They will be given information on how to self-isolate and what special precautions to take. You can also consult the document [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Breastfeeding - Information for Mothers with COVID-19](#).