**COVID-19 & Breastfeeding Support at PHFE WIC**

At WIC, we are working hard during this rapidly evolving time in order to provide guidance to our families. While there is limited information regarding safe practices related to breastfeeding and COVID-19, many agencies (AAP, ABM included) are turning to the CDC for guidance.

**According to the CDC:**

* “Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. However, much is unknown about COVID-19. Whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding should be determined by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers.”
* Person-to-person spread is **thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets** produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. In limited studies of COVID-19 and another Coronavirus infection, **the virus has not been detected in breast milk**.

**Mothers who are well with no symptoms, should continue to breastfeed and follow proper preventative measures to reduce risk of exposure.**

**For confirmed cases or persons under investigation (POI) for COVID-19**

While feeding at the breast:

* A mother with confirmed COVID-19 or POI should [take all possible precautions](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html) to avoid spreading the virus to her infant, including washing her hands before touching the infant and wearing a face mask, if possible, while feeding at the breast.

While bottle feeding:

* If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, the mother should wash her hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and follow [recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/breastpump.html) for proper pump cleaning after each use. If possible, consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant.

***Note:*** *It is possible that mom and baby will be separated in the hospital following delivery. Please see the* ***LA County Local Agency Breastfeeding Support*** *document for pump distribution for these cases.*

**What is not currently known?**

* If pregnant women are at greater risk of getting sick from COVID-19
* If the virus can be passed during pregnancy or childbirth to the infant (although no infants born to mother with COVID-19 have tested positive)
* If there are increased risks to the infant during pregnancy (There have been some problems related to pregnancy or deliver in some mother show tested positive but it is not clear if the outcomes were related to the infection)
* If newborns with COVID-19 are at increased risk for severe complications
* If mothers with COVID-19 can transmit the virus via breast milk

Refer to CDC Guidelines for details:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html#anchor_1584169714>

For pumping participants refer to Breast Pump Cleaning from CDC:

English: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/hygiene/breast-pump-fact-sheet-p.pdf>

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/hygiene/breast-pump-fact-sheet-sp-h.pdf>