DECISION TREE
for breastfeeding in context of COVID-19:
Guidance for health care and community settings

Is mother a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19?
- NO
  - Support mother to breastfeed:
    - For newborns, initiate breastfeeding within first hour after delivery and practice skin-to-skin care as soon as possible
    - For infants < 6 months, support exclusive breastfeeding
    - For infants and young children > 6 months, continue breastfeeding with safe and healthy complementary foods
  - Do not separate mother and baby
- YES
  - Mother should wear a medical mask during feeding. If a medical mask is unavailable, advise mother to:
    - Sneeze or cough into a tissue and immediately dispose of it & wash hands
    - Chest should be washed if she has been coughing on it. Breast does not need to be washed before every feeding.

Is mother well enough to breastfeed?
- NO
  - Advise mother to:
    - Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub before touching the baby
    - Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that she has touched
- YES

Is mother able to express breast milk (including with help)?
- NO
  - Feed infant formula milk to the baby
  - Feed donor human milk to the baby until the mother recovers
  - Facilitate wet nursing of the baby until the mother recovers
  - Feed mother’s expressed milk to the baby
  - Breast to direct breastfeeding when mother is well enough to breastfeed
- YES

Is human milk available from a donor human milk bank?
- NO
  - Feed infant formula milk to the baby
  - Feed donor human milk to the baby until the mother recovers
  - Facilitate wet nursing of the baby until the mother recovers
- YES

Is wet-nursing culturally acceptable and can a safe wet-nurse be identified?
- NO
  - Feed infant formula milk to the baby
  - Feed donor human milk to the baby until the mother recovers
- YES

Is mother willing to breastfeed after recovery?
- NO
  - Continue alternative modes of feeding the baby
- YES

World Health Organization

www.who.int/teams/results_COVID-19_in_healthcare_settings