

From: Teja Ram <teja.ram@nic.in>

Date: 23 April 2020 at 17:53:26 IST

To: arun.ibfan@gmail.com

Cc: VANDANA GURNANI <vandana.g@ias.nic.in>, Dr Manohar Agnani <jsrch-mohfw@gov.in>, Ajay Khera <ajaykheramch@gmail.com>, dineshbaswal2020 <dineshbaswal2020@gmail.com>

Subject: Concerns on seperation of babies from Mothers and bottle feeding

Dear Dr. Arun,

Please refer your email to Hon'ble Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, dated 17-04-2020 on the above subject. We appreciate your concern for Mothers and Babies.

In this regard please find the response enclosed.

Regards,

Dr. TEJA RAM, MD
Joint Commissioner (MH)
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Government of India
519-A, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi - 110011
Tel: 011- 23063483, Mob: 9868230770
Email: teja.ram@nic.in
drtejaram10461@yahoo.co.in



Response to concern on separation of Baby from Mother and bottle-feeding

- Ideally the mother and newborn should not be separated and continue skin to skin contact and initiate breastfeeding within first 60 minutes after the birth with precautionary measures of respiratory hygiene.
- In the context of COVID 19 pandemic, with the regards to breast feeding it is stated that there is no evidence of perinatal or transplacental transmission of virus from pregnant women with COVID -19 to child. However newborn is susceptible to person to person spread via droplets and inadequate infection prevention measures like hand washing.
- Based on the clinical condition of mother and newborn, the decision may be taken on case to case basis.
- The main risk of breastfeeding is close contact between mother and baby. If mother coughs or sneezes, this could contain droplets which are infected with the virus, leading to infection to the baby.
- Therefore, during breastfeeding by mother with COVID -19, following precautions are necessary-
 1. Mother should wear a mask and practice respiratory hygiene
 2. Mother should wash hands (for 40 seconds) before each feeding session
 3. Routinely disinfect and clean the surfaces
- If a woman with COVID -19 is too unwell to breastfeed, she can be supported to safely provide her baby with breast milk in other ways, including by- expressing milk and using donor human milk. Following precautions need to be taken while using expressed milk-
 1. Practice hand hygiene: Washing hands before touching breast pump or bottles
 2. A dedicated breast pump should be used.
 3. After each pumping session, all parts that come into contact with breast milk should be thoroughly washed and the entire pump should be appropriately disinfected per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Expressed breast milk should be fed to the newborn by a healthy caregiver