Supporting mothers to breastfeed during COVID-19 – evidence and practice

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Webinar on Covid-19 and Breastfeeding
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Why breastfeeding during the Covid-19 pandemic is important?

### Antimicrobial factors
- Secretory IgA, IgM, IgG, Oligosachharides, Lysozyme, Leucocytes

### Cytokines & anti-inflammatory factors
- Interleukins, Prostaglandins, TNF

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Mother gets infection

Produces antibodies

Secrets antibodies in breastmilk

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Evidence of a significant secretory-IgA-dominant SARS-CoV-2 immune response in human milk following recovery from COVID-19

Alisa Fox¹, Jessica Marino², Fatima Amanar², Florian Krammer³, Jennifer Hahn-Holbrook², Susan Zolla-Pazner¹, and Rebecca L. Powell¹³
Does the Covid-19 virus transmit through breastmilk?


WHO and UNICEF recommendations

- Standard/recommended infant feeding practices
- Infection protection and control (IPC)
- Expressed breastmilk/donor human milk/wetnursing/relactation/BMS
- Rooming-in
Covid-19 suspected or confirmed mothers – Breastfeeding at birth

- Mothers should be supported at birth to practice:
  - Skin-to-Skin contact
  - Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth
  - Rooming-in
  - Breastfeed exclusively

- Appropriate Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures

Institutions should develop and communicate the SOPs for breastfeeding to all caregivers, mothers, and families.
Covid-19 suspected or confirmed mothers – Breastfeeding infants and young children

Infants < 6 months
- Exclusive breastfeeding

Infants and young children > 6 months up to 2 years of age and beyond
- Continue breastfeeding
- Appropriate complementary foods

- Infection Prevention and Control measures
- Logistic support
- Counselling and skilled support
What to do if breastfeeding is not possible due to mother’s sickness

- BMS/Animal Milk
- Wet nursing
- Donor human milk
- Expressed breastmilk
Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures by Covid -19 suspected or confirmed mother

- **Hand Hygiene:** Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub, especially before touching the baby
- **Wear a medical mask**
- **Respiratory hygiene:**
  - Use a tissue for sneeze and cough
  - Dispose the tissue in a closed bin
  - Hand hygiene
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces**
Key Messages

- Covid-19 virus is not transmitted in breastmilk
- All mothers irrespective of their Covid-19 status should be supported to practice optimal breastfeeding
- Covid-19 suspected or confirmed mother and her baby should not be separated unless required due to sickness
- Covid-19 suspected or confirmed mothers should observe appropriate IPC measures

If mother is too sick to breastfeed, best options are expressed breastmilk followed by donor human milk
Thanks!!!