



HAVING YOUR BABY IF YOU HAVE COVID 19

On April 28th we started to test all women admitted to labor and delivery for Covid-19, if you feel sick or not. If you know you have Covid-19 or if your test comes back positive for Covid-19, you will need to make some decisions about where your baby should stay and how you want to feed your baby.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO MY BABY OF GETTING COVID-19?

We still do not know the chances that your baby can get sick from Covid-19 at birth, and we do not know the exact risks to your baby if he/she DOES get infected. We have had some infants infected with COVID-19 at Boston Medical Center, to date all of the babies have recovered.

IF I HAVE COVID-19, WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BABY AFTER BIRTH ON LABOR AND DELIVERY AND POST-PARTUM?

Many parents fear hurting their babies by exposing them to COVID-19. However, there are many benefits of mother-baby skin-to-skin contact that help with breastfeeding and help the baby have a normal temperature and normal sugar levels. We do not know how much skin-to-skin contact increases the risk of your baby getting COVID-19. We also do not know if infants get sick in the same way that children and adults do. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that we talk to you about your choices before you give birth. Your choices may change depending on how you feel, and that is ok.

- If you **do** feel well enough to care for your baby, you will have the following choices:
 1. Your baby stays in your post-partum room and you care for your baby directly. We recommend that you use a mask and hand washing when you care for or hold your baby. When you are not holding your baby the baby should be in a bassinet 6 feet away from you. Your baby will stay in your post-partum room the whole time.
 2. Your baby stays in your post-partum room, but you have a healthy support person care for your baby without you directly holding or caring for your baby. Your healthy support person will wear a mask and gloves when caring for your baby. Your baby will stay in your post-partum room the whole time.



3. If you are worried about the risk of having your baby in your room because of COVID-19, our nurses and doctors will care for your baby in a separate space while you are at the hospital recovering from birth. Your healthy support person can visit the baby any time. We can also help you identify a family member or trusted friend to care for your baby after discharge so that you can maintain a safe distance from your newborn.
- If you **do not** feel well enough to care for your baby, your baby can go to the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) to be cared for by the NICU team. You will not be able to visit the baby in the NICU.
 1. Your support person will be able to visit the baby in the NICU only after a negative Covid-19 test

WHAT IS THE SAFEST WAY TO FEED MY BABY IF I HAVE COVID-19?

Breastmilk is the best nutrition for your baby. There is no evidence that Covid-19 is passed through breastmilk. It is passed through respiratory droplets (cough, sneeze, saliva). In general we know that when two people are close to each other, someone with COVID-19 infection can get the other person sick. So there are risks when you are very close to your baby during direct breastfeeding that he/she can get COVID-19.

You will have the following feeding choices:

- **Directly breastfeed your baby.** If you pick this option, you should wash your hands and wear a mask before holding or feeding your baby. Our staff will show you how to wash your hands and use your mask correctly. When you are not feeding your baby, keep your baby at least 6 feet away from you to decrease the chance that your baby gets sick.
- **Pump your breastmilk** and have a caregiver or nurse feed your baby through a bottle or spoon (or you could feed your pumped breastmilk to your baby after washing your hands, using a mask, and wearing a clean gown.)
- **Formula feed** by healthy caregiver or nurse (or you could feed your pumped breastmilk to your baby after washing your hands, using a mask, and wearing a clean gown.)



ON DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL

Whatever options you chose, it will help if you plan on a healthy caregiver to be with you so that they can help you take care of your baby. When you are discharged home, that person can continue to help care for you and the baby as you recover. Another option is to identify a trusted friend or family member who can care for the baby until you are recovered or cleared from COVID.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GO HOME?

We recommend you continue to be careful about affecting other people, including your baby, with COVID-19. After you go home, you should continue to watch your symptoms. Your healthcare provider will help you decide when it is safe for you to stop using precautions like a mask when you are at home with your family.

We do recommend that when you are at home that you:

- Keep baby 6 feet away from when not using a mask
 - Wash your hands frequently with soapy water for 20 seconds, particularly before handling your baby
 - Do not share household items like cups or toothbrushes
 - Do not cook meals for others until your healthcare provider tells you its safe
 - Wash places that you touch frequently like the kitchen and bathroom sinks
 - Continue to use a mask when outside of your house
 - Continue to practice social distancing
 - Contact BMC if you are sicker, having trouble breathing, or have more fevers
- If you choose to have your baby cared for by another trusted person as you recover from COVID-19 we encourage you to continue to pump and provide breastmilk