



## **HAVING YOUR BABY IF YOU HAVE COVID-19**

The recommendations in this handout were developed by midwifery, obstetrics, newborn medicine and the lactation support program at Boston Medical Center.

- When you come to labor and delivery to have your baby, we recommend that you have a test for Covid-19.
- If you had Covid-19 you may or may not need another testing depending on how long ago you were sick.
- If you have Covid-19 or if your test comes back positive for Covid-19, we want to help get you ready for what to expect when you are at the hospital.
- If you decide not to have a Covid-19 test we will take care of you and your family as if you were sick with Covid-19.

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

One of the first questions on everyone's mind, is "will my baby be ok?"

- Most babies born to mothers with Covid-19 do not get infected with the virus when precautions are used.
- Babies who do get Covid-19 usually do not get very sick.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics supports having babies born to people with Covid-19 to stay in the room with their family and breastfeed!

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

- We will use masks, gloves, and protective clothing to protect your baby, family and staff during and after your birth.
- We support mother-baby skin-to-skin contact after birth in the labor room. Skin-to-skin contact helps with breastfeeding and helps the baby have a normal temperature and normal sugar levels. We recommend you wash your hands and wear a mask with skin-to skin contact.



- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that babies born to mothers with Covid-19 are not separated from their mothers.
- We recommend that the baby stay in your room with you after the birth.
- You and your support person can care for your baby directly.
- You should use a mask and wash your hands when you care for or hold your baby. Our staff will show you how to wash your hands and use your mask correctly.
- You should keep your baby in a bassinet or crib at least 6 feet away from you when you are not feeding the baby to decrease the chance that your baby gets sick.
- Your baby will stay in your post-partum room the whole time. Unfortunately, we won't be able to bring the baby to the nursery.
- If you **do not** feel well enough to care for your baby:
  - You can have another family member help you in the room
  - If you **do not have anyone to help you** care for the baby in your room, your baby can go to the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) to be cared for by the nurses and doctors in the NICU.
  - You will **not be able to visit** the baby in the NICU, but you will be able to see and talk to your baby using our Angel Eye camera system.
  - Please note: There are extra precautions in the NICU. Your support person will be able to visit the baby in the NICU only after getting a Covid-19 test and/or finishing a quarantine.



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

Breast milk is the best nutrition for most babies. It can help protect babies from getting sick. There are rare times when breastfeeding or feeding expressed breast milk is not recommended. Studies show that Covid-19 is probably not passed through breast milk, but we do not know if that is always true. We do know that when two people are close to each other, someone with COVID-19 infection can get the other person sick, like a mother and her baby.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) support breastfeeding for babies born to mothers with Covid-19.
- We do recommend that you take extra precautions so your baby will not get sick like washing your hands and putting on a mask before holding and feeding your baby.
- You should keep your baby in a bassinet or crib at least 6 feet away from you when you are not feeding the baby to decrease the chance that your baby gets sick. Our staff will show you how to wash your hands and use your mask correctly.
- Your healthcare provider will tell you when it is safe to hold and feed your baby without a mask.

You will have the following feeding choices:

- **Directly breastfeed your baby.** You should wash your hands and wear a mask before breastfeeding your baby.
- **Pump your breastmilk.** You can have a support person or nurse feed your baby with a bottle or spoon with your breast milk. You should wash your hands and wear a mask before pumping. You can also feed your pumped breastmilk to your baby after washing your hands and using a mask.
- **Formula feed.** You can have a support person or nurse feed your baby with formula using a bottle.



## **ON DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL**

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.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GO HOME?**

We recommend you take precautions to keep your baby, family, and others from getting sick 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 you 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 it is 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