



# BREASTFEEDING AND COVID-19 GUIDANCE

## BACKGROUND

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) first began as an outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December, 2019. Since then, COVID-19 has become a global pandemic that has impacted the world and resulted in the declaration of a national emergency in the United States.

Although the nation is experiencing uncertain times, the National WIC Association (NWA) is here to provide support to the WIC community. NWA is the non-profit education arm and advocacy voice of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the 6.9 million mothers and young children served by WIC and the 12,000 service provider agencies who are the front lines of WIC's public health nutrition services for the nation's nutritionally at-risk mothers and young children.

## BREASTFEEDING GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19

With various recommendations circulating from medical, public health, and breastfeeding authorities regarding breastfeeding and COVID-19, it can be difficult navigating which resource is best to use. The National WIC Association recommends following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations for breastfeeding and COVID-19.

CDC recommends the following:<sup>1</sup>

### Mother/Baby Contact

- » To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from the mother to the newborn, facilities should consider temporarily separating (i.e., separate rooms) the mother who has confirmed COVID-19 or is a Patient Under Investigation (PUI) from her baby until the mother's transmission-based precautions are discontinued.

### Breastfeeding

- » During temporary separation, mothers who intend to breastfeed should be encouraged to express their breastmilk to establish and maintain milk supply. If possible, a dedicated breast pump should be provided. Prior to expressing breast milk, mothers should practice hand hygiene. 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. This expressed breast milk should be fed to the newborn by a healthy caregiver.
- » If a mother and newborn do room-in and the mother wishes to feed at the breast, she should put on a facemask and practice hand hygiene before each feeding."

Detailed recommendations can be found on CDC's website.



## WIC: EMPOWERING FAMILIES, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Please direct all questions to Brian Dittmeier, Senior Public Policy Counsel, at [bdittmeier@nwica.org](mailto:bdittmeier@nwica.org).

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) Interim Considerations for Infection Prevention and Control of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Settings. Accessed online: <http://ow.ly/x3bW50yPxmu>