



INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING DURING COVID-19




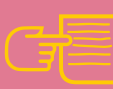




Breastfeeding **strengthens a child's immune system** by directly transferring antibodies from the mother, **improves survival and provides lifelong health benefits**

- Start to breastfeed the child **within one hour of birth**
- Exclusively breastfeed for **6 months**
- On completion of 6 months **give complementary foods along with breastmilk**

CONTINUE BREASTFEEDING WITH PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT FROM INFECTIONS!



If breastfeeding mother has COVID or its symptoms like fever, cough or difficulty in breathing she should:



-  **1 Seek early medical care**
-  **2 Follow instructions** of the healthcare provider
-  **3 Use a mask** when breastfeeding or near the child
-  **4 Cover her nose and mouth with handkerchief/ tissue or with bent elbow** while sneezing and coughing
-  **5 Wash hands for at least 40 seconds with soap and water** after coughing and sneezing, before and after contact with the child including feeding
-  **6 Routinely clean/ disinfect any surface she has touched** by cleaning with soap or alcohol based sanitizer

If mother is too ill to breastfeed, she can express her milk in a properly cleaned container and feed it to the child with a clean cup or spoon

Before expressing milk

-  **Wash hands for 40 seconds** with soap and water
-  **Properly clean the cup or container** for expressed milk with soap and water

While feeding expressed milk

-  **Wear a mask**
-  Feed expressed milk with a **properly cleaned cup or spoon**



If mother is too sick to breastfeed or express breastmilk, she should explore the possibility of:

- **Relactation:** (restarting breastfeeding after a gap)
- **Use of donor human milk** in case of mother's sickness/mother's death/ lactation failure*

If the infant or young child becomes sick with suspected, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 or any other illness, mothers should continue breastfeeding

For baby's rapid growth and brain development, on completion of 6 months caregivers should, start complementary food along with breastmilk. They should:



- 1 Wash hands for 40 seconds with soap and water before cooking, feeding and eating.
- 2 Wash child's hands for 40 seconds with soap and water before feeding.
- 3 Cover nose and mouth with handkerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing. Throw used tissue in a closed bin immediately after use.
- 4 Wear a mask while feeding, if they have cough or cold.
- 5 Clean the food preparation area with soap and water.
- 6 Feed the child from a separate bowl.
- 7 Use a properly cleaned bowl and spoon to feed the child.

- 8 Make child's every bite count by feeding the child a variety of foods such as pulses, milk and milk products, yellow, orange and green vegetables and fruits.
- 9 If fresh foods are not available due to lockdown, Identify healthy food options, limit highly processed foods that are typically high in saturated fat, sugars and salt, and avoid sugary drinks.
- 10 Feed children usual amount of foods and fluids more often during illness and increase the amount of food after illness.



At 6 Months: 2-3 spoons per meal, 2-3 times a day

6 to 9 months: Half a katori per meal, 2-3 times a day and one healthy snack

9 to 12 months: 3/4 katori per meal, 3-4 times a day and two healthy snacks

1 to 2 year: 1 katori per meal, 3-4 times a day and two healthy snacks

In the box: Age appropriate feeding schedule

Delay in introduction of complementary foods affects the child's physical and brain growth and increases the risk of undernutrition



Whether or not the mother or infant is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, **Health Facility Staff and Community Health Workers must ensure:**

- Breastfeeding counselling and practical support for breastfeeding to all pregnant women and mothers with infants
- Mother and infant should remain together, and practice skin-to-skin contact especially, straight after birth to establish breastfeeding
- Not to promote breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats, pacifiers or dummies in any part of your facilities, or by any of your staff

*Available at health facilities with Comprehensive Lactation Management Centre