

Information and options for families having a baby during the COVID-19 pandemic where the mother is suspect or confirmed COVID-19 positive

Guiding Principles

- TOH has taken all possible precautions to create a safe and supportive environment for families having a baby during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The following recommendations are based on the latest evidence from Canadian and International Pediatric Experts.
- Covid-19 is a respiratory virus that is spread through close contact with an infected person (less than 6 feet for more than a few minutes).
- Newborns have immature immune systems which makes them at a higher risk of serious respiratory viral infections.

Options for the care of baby if mom and baby well

Option 1: Temporary separation

- Nurses will care for baby in a special nursery on the mother baby unit
- **OR**
- A non-exposed, healthy caregiver will care for baby in mom's room
 - Healthy caregiver:
 - must be someone who **does not live with mom**
 - has not seen mom for 14 days
 - will wear PPE when they are within 6 feet of mom (health care team will help them don PPE)
 - will stay 6 feet from mom as much as possible
 - nurse or non-exposed caregiver will feed baby expressed breast milk or formula
 - Discharge:
 - Baby will be discharged when mom is discharged
 - If mom's COVID-19 test comes back negative, baby discharged to mom
 - If mom's COVID-19 test not back yet, baby discharged to non-exposed caregiver either in their home or in a separate room in mom's home until mom's tests negative for COVID-19
 - Could take 2 weeks

Option 2: Care by mom in her room

- Mom cares for baby in her room and takes precautions during contact with her baby
 - Wears surgical mask at all times when touching baby
 - Wears surgical mask when baby is less than 6 feet from her face
 - Washes hands well with soap and water or uses alcohol-based hand sanitizer prior to all contact with baby
 - Avoids touching her and baby's face during contact
- Discharge:
 - Baby discharged home with mom
 - Precautions that were followed in hospital including wearing mask to be continued at home until mom tests negative for COVID-19
 - Could take 2 weeks

What does having COVID-19 mean for Breastfeeding?

- Research is limited, but to date evidence says COVID-19 is not passed through breastmilk.
- Breastmilk is the best source of nutrition for most infants.
- If mom pumping, she must wash her breasts carefully with soap and water prior to expressing her breast milk.
- **The Ottawa Hospital Pediatric and Neonatal team recommends** that the baby receives mom's breast milk:
 - by breast feeding if mom chooses to care for her baby directly
 - by pumping/expressing her milk to be fed to her baby by a non-exposed, healthy caregiver until mom tests negative for COVID-19
 - Could take 2 weeks