



Should suspected or proven COVID-19 mothers continue to breastfeed their babies?

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KEY FINDINGS

In limited studies, SARS-COV2 has not been detected in breast milk. However, there is not enough information to date on whether women who are sick with COVID-19 can pass the virus through breast milk.

- Breast milk gives babies protection against many illnesses. It also is the best source of nutrition for most babies.
- Currently, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that mothers with suspected or proven COVID-19 continue to breastfeed¹⁻³.
- Mothers with suspected or proven COVID-19 and their babies should not be completely separated. Potential risks and benefits of rooming-in should be thoroughly discussed and allowing for shared decision-making with families and health care providers. Limiting the baby's exposure via respiratory secretions may require more careful adherence to the recommendations depending on the mother's illness¹⁻³.
- Findings from breastmilk samples of a small group of cases of COVID-19 positive mothers showed negative for the virus⁴.
- Due to the limited data on COVID-19, recommendations are also largely based on infection prevention and control considerations for other respiratory viruses such as influenza, SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV⁵.

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RESULTS

Clinical records, laboratory results, and chest CT scans were retrospectively reviewed for nine pregnant women with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 pneumonia. Breastmilk samples were collected and tested from 6 patients after the first lactation and all samples tested negative for the virus.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this small group of cases suggest that there is currently no evidence of presence of virus in breastmilk of women who develop COVID-19 pneumonia in late pregnancy.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest

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5. Schwartz, D.A.; Graham, A.L. Potential Maternal and Infant Outcomes from Coronavirus 2019-nCoV (SARS-CoV-2) Infecting Pregnant Women: Lessons from SARS, MERS, and Other Human Coronavirus Infections. *Viruses* 2020, 12, 194 (Accessed on April 7, 2020).

Table 1. Characteristics of included studies

No.	Title/Author	Study design	Country	Population	Intervention Group(s)	Comparison Group(s)	Outcomes	Key findings
1	Clinical characteristics and intrauterine vertical transmission potential of COVID-19 infection in nine pregnant women: a retrospective review of medical records/ Chen H, Guo J, Wang C, Luo F, Yu X, Zhang W, Li J, Zhao D, Xu D, Gong Q, Liao J, Yang H, Hou W, Zhang Y	Retrospective study	Wuhan, China	Nine pregnant women with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 pneumonia (ie, with maternal throat swab samples that were positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 [SARS-CoV-2]) who were admitted to Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University, Wuhan, China, from Jan 20 to Jan 31, 2020.	Breastmilk samples were also collected and tested from patients after the first lactation.			No evidence of SARS-COV2 virus in breastmilk samples