

# COVID-19 & HANDLING EXPRESSED HUMAN MILK

Information for Healthcare Facilities (U.S.A.)

Last updated 23 April 2020

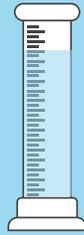
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Tips to guide delivery of a parent's own expressed milk from postpartum to neonatal unit when COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed and the dyad is separated.<sup>3,6, 11-12</sup>

Follow the guidance for milk expression when COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed.<sup>8</sup>



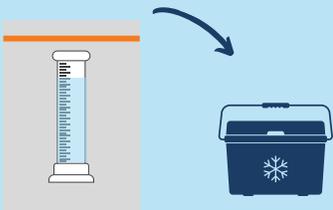
Wash hands. Seal the milk container. Label per facility protocols.



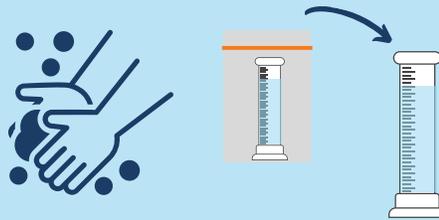
Use a 2-person hand-off to drop container of milk (in postpartum isolation area) into a clean plastic zip lock bag (outside of postpartum isolation area).<sup>1,3</sup> Seal the zip lock bag.



Use facility protocols for transporting and storing milk in the neonatal unit.\*



For feeding, open the zip lock bag. Wash hands. Remove the milk. Follow facility protocols for preparing a feed.



Wash hands before and after feeding the infant. Wear a mask. Discard infant feeding items and milk per facility protocol.



\*SARS-CoV-2 may be active on container surfaces from hours to days.<sup>2</sup> Consider storing milk for at least 72 hours before use.

**COVID-19 TIP:** Provide postpartum patients who are separated from their infants with timely lactation support to establish and maintain lactation through pumping or hand expression. As soon as parent and infant are well-enough, support nursing, rooming-in, and skin-to-skin contact, with recommended respiratory and hand hygiene measures.

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NOTE: Existing IPC measures in some facilities may require use of disinfectant wipes on the sealed containers before transport between isolation areas. See HMBANA guidance for a non-chemical aseptic method to transport milk between units when perinatal COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed:

<https://www.hmbana.org/news/milk-handling-for-covid-19-positive-or-suspected-mothers-in-the-hospital-setting.html>. Use disinfectant wipes on containers with caution. Ensure the disinfectant does not come into contact with the milk or the infant's mouth. Do not use disinfectant wipes on plastic milk storage bags or bottle nipples.

## SOURCE TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

1. Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) Milk handling for COVID-19 positive or suspected mothers in the hospital setting. <https://www.hmbana.org/news/milk-handling-for-covid-19-positive-or-suspected-mothers-in-the-hospital-setting.html>
2. Marinelli, K.A. and Lawrence, R.M. Safe handling of containers of expressed human milk in all settings during the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 3 April 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0890334420919083>
3. N van Doremalen, et al. Aerosol and surface stability of HCoV-19 (SARS-CoV-2) compared to SARS-CoV-1. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 2020, 382(16), 1564-1567. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2004973 (2020). <https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>.
4. UNICEF UK, Infant Feeding on Neonatal Units During the COVID-19 Outbreak. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/infant-feeding-on-neonatal-units-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>.
5. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). How to clean, sanitize, and store infant feeding items. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/cleansanitize.html>
6. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). How to keep your breast pump kit clean: the essentials. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/breastpump.html>
7. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Considerations for inpatient obstetric healthcare settings. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/inpatient-obstetric-healthcare-guidance.html>
8. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Pregnancy and Breastfeeding. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>
9. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Proper storage and preparation of breast milk. [https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm)
10. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Use cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
11. World Health Organization (WHO) Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19. [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak)
12. World Health Organization (WHO). Clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) when COVID-19 disease is suspected. Interim guidance, v 1.2, 13 March 2020. [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/clinical-management-of-severe-acute-respiratory-infection-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/clinical-management-of-severe-acute-respiratory-infection-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected)
13. World Health Organization (WHO). Q&A on COVID-19: Pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-pregnancy-childbirth-and-breastfeeding>