



# Pregnancy and Breastfeeding during COVID-19



## Does pregnancy increase your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19?



Scientists are still studying whether pregnant people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Based on currently available information, pregnant people seem to have the same risk as adults who are not pregnant. However:

- Pregnant people have changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infections.
- Pregnant people have had a higher risk of severe illness when infected with viruses from the same family as COVID-19 and other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza.

## What can pregnant people do to stay healthy?

It is always important for pregnant people to protect themselves from illnesses. If you are pregnant, you should:



Avoid people who are sick or who have been exposed to the virus.



Clean your hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

## Can COVID-19 spread from mother to child?

Based on current evidence, scientists think:

- Mother-to-child transmission of coronavirus during pregnancy is unlikely, but after birth a newborn is susceptible to person-to-person spread.
- A very small number of babies have tested positive for the virus shortly after birth. However, it is unknown if these babies got the virus before or after birth.
- The virus has not been detected in amniotic fluid, breastmilk, or other maternal samples.

## What should you know about breastfeeding if you have COVID-19?

Breast milk provides protection against many illnesses and is the best source of nutrition for most infants. However, you, along with your family, and healthcare providers, should decide whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding.

- In limited studies, COVID-19 has not been detected in breast milk; however, scientists do not know for sure whether mothers with COVID-19 can spread the virus via breast milk.
- If you are sick and choose to directly breastfeed:
  - Wear a facemask and wash your hands before each feeding.
- If you are sick and choose to express breast milk:
  - Express breast milk to establish and maintain milk supply.
  - Use a dedicated breast pump.
  - Wash your hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and before expressing breast milk.
  - Follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning after each use, cleaning all parts that come into contact with breast milk.
  - If possible, consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant.

