Breastfeeding when COVID-19 Positive

- There is limited information about breastfeeding as it relates to COVID-19. In other coronavirus infections, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), the virus has not been detected in breastmilk.
- Breastmilk provides protection against many illnesses.
- Breastfeeding is recommended even if you have COVID-19 as there is no evidence that the virus is transmitted in breast milk.
- Take all self-isolation precautions and wear a face mask while breastfeeding to avoid spreading the virus to your baby.
- If you sneeze or cough over your exposed chest/breasts, wash the area with soap and water before breastfeeding or expressing your milk.
- If you feel too sick to breastfeed or are separated from your baby, you can hand express or pump your milk at least eight times in 24 hours, and once during the night, to maintain your breastmilk supply. The expressed breastmilk may be fed to your baby from a cup, spoon or bottle by someone who is well.
- If expressing breast milk, wash your hands and put on a face mask before touching any pump or bottle parts. After each use, clean the pump according to manufacturer's instructions
- Do not use borrowed or second-hand breast pumps unless they are hospital grade rental pumps (follow hospital's instructions). Some used or second-hand breast pumps have internal parts that are difficult to properly sterilize.
- If a bottle is used to feed expressed breast milk, ensure that it is properly sterilized.
- All caregivers must practice good hygiene measures, including hand washing and wearing a face mask, before touching the baby, breast pump, or feeding bottles and equipment.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

More information
Learn more about breastfeeding and COVID-19 and breastfeeding.

For more information about COVID-19, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.