

# COVID-19 Guidance for Parents and Caregivers of Newborns (0 – 30 days old)



This guidance is about parents, caregivers, and newborns with at least one of the following:

- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Positive test for COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) and/or
- Recent close contact\* with a person who has COVID-19 and/or a positive COVID-19 test.

\*Close contact means that someone **was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for a total of 15 minutes or longer**, even if both people were wearing masks. Shorter periods that add up to 15 minutes on the same day also count. Close contact can also mean that someone had a briefer, but major, exposure to the COVID-19 positive person's respiratory droplets.

**A person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is no longer considered contagious if they have completed their isolation period.**

**A person who was in quarantine following a close contact with a COVID-19 positive person is no longer considered contagious once they complete their quarantine if there are no symptoms and no positive test.**

## Should a mother with COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or exposure be separated from her baby at the hospital?

**Usually, no.** Early and close contact between the mother and a newborn baby has many benefits. There is a chance that a mother can pass the virus to her newborn, although **the chance is low if the mother wears a mask, stays 6 feet from her baby when possible, and washes hands with soap and water before holding or coming into contact with her child.** A mother who is still contagious may choose to separate from her baby in the hospital. However, if she is not able to maintain separation at home, separation in the hospital may not prevent the baby from exposure to the virus later.

**Separation may not be necessary if the baby has tested positive for COVID-19.** But separation may be necessary for newborns with a higher chance of severe illness, such as preterm infants or infants with underlying medical conditions. Separation may also

be necessary if a mother is too ill to care for her baby. The decision about whether to separate a mother and her newborn in the hospital should be made by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers.

## Should a newborn whose mother has COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or exposure be tested?

**Yes.** The baby should be tested when they are approximately 24 hours old. If the first test result is negative or not available, then the baby should be tested again at 48-72 hours of age. If test results are positive, then all caregivers of the newborn should wear masks and wash hands with soap and water before holding or coming into contact with the baby for 10 days after the sample that tested positive was collected.

## Can a mother with COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or exposure still breastfeed her baby?

**Usually, yes.** There is no evidence that a mother infected with COVID-19 can pass the virus to her baby through breastmilk. Breastfeeding can protect the baby from infection and is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It can also reduce the risk of certain health conditions for babies and mothers. Whether to start or continue breastfeeding should be

# COVID-19 Guidance for Parents and Caregivers of Newborns (0 – 30 days old)



determined by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers.

Mothers who may be infected should wash their hands with soap and water before breastfeeding and wear a mask during breastfeeding. If an infected mother chooses not to nurse her newborn, then she may pump her breast milk after washing hands with soap and water. This breast milk can be fed to the infant by an uninfected caregiver. Also, although an infected mother may not be able to visit her baby in the NICU, she can still provide pumped breastmilk for the infant.

## How can a parent or caregiver with COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or exposure reduce the chance of passing the virus to their baby?

- Wear a mask and wash hands with soap and water before all contact with the baby.
- Maintain physical distance of more than 6 feet between the baby and the parent or caregiver, when possible.
- **Plastic infant face shields are NOT recommended, and masks should NOT be placed on babies or children younger than 2 years of age. These products are dangerous and could lead to suffocation.**
- If the infected parent or caregiver chooses to minimize contact with the baby to reduce the chance of infecting the baby, then choose alternate caregivers who are not at increased risk for severe illness to care for the baby, if possible.
- A parent or caregiver with **suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection is no longer** considered contagious when all the following are true:
  - At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared or the sample that tested positive was collected (up to 20 days if they have more severe illness or are

severely immunocompromised), **AND**

- At least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use of fever reducing medicines, **AND**
- Their other symptoms have improved.
- A parent or caregiver who has had close contact with a person who has COVID-19 is no longer considered to be potentially contagious when all the following are true:
  - At least 14 days have passed since their last contact, **AND**
  - They have not developed symptoms that could be due to COVID-19, **AND**
  - They have not tested positive for COVID-19.

## When do isolation and quarantine guidelines apply to a newborn?

- If a baby tests positive for COVID-19, then they should enter isolation like others, but they still require 24/7 care. Choose a healthy caregiver who is not at increased risk for severe illness to care for the baby, if possible. The caregiver should wear a mask and wash hands with soap and water before providing the baby with care.
- The baby would be considered contagious until the end of the isolation period. This means:
  - At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared or the sample that tested positive was collected (up to 20 days if they have more severe illness or are severely immunocompromised), **AND**
  - At least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use of fever reducing medicines, **AND**
  - Their other symptoms have improved.
- Parents of infants who test positive for COVID-19 should closely follow-up with the infant's healthcare provider (by phone, telemedicine, or in office) for the first few weeks after birth. This should be done even if there are no signs of illness.

# COVID-19 Guidance for Parents and Caregivers of Newborns (0 – 30 days old)



- If a baby tests negative for COVID-19 or was not tested BUT the parent or caregiver has a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection, then the baby should quarantine for at least 10 days following the last day of the parent or caregiver's 10-day isolation period. A 14-day quarantine is the safest option, especially if your baby has regular contact with people who are at high risk ([over 65 or with underlying health conditions](#)). If your baby does not have regular contact with people at high risk, then ACPHD allows a shorter quarantine period of 10 days. During this time, if the infected parent or caregiver chooses to minimize contact with the baby to reduce the chance of infecting the baby, then choose a healthy caregiver who is not at increased risk for severe illness. The caregiver should wear a mask and wash hands with soap and water before providing care.
- If a newborn is in **either** isolation or quarantine, then call to let your healthcare provider's office or the emergency room know before bringing the baby to a clinic or hospital.

## Can a newborn infected with COVID-19 get severely ill?

Most infected newborns have no symptoms or mild illness. Severe illness has been reported but appears to be uncommon. Newborns with underlying medical conditions and pre-term infants (born less than 37 weeks gestational age) may be at higher risk for severe illness.

## What can parents and caregivers do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at home?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (even when at home). Wear a mask and stay 6 feet away from the person who is sick, if possible.
- Avoid gatherings that include people who do not live in your household.
- Wear a mask in public settings and when around people who do not live in your household.
- Cover cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and immediately wash hands.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily, such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Contact healthcare provider if anyone in the home develops symptoms of COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has symptoms.



### ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Colleen Chawla – Agency Director  
Kimi Watkins-Tartt – Director  
Nicholas Moss, MD – Health Officer

#### Contact

Public Health Department:  
(510) 267-8000 Main Line

COVID-19 Information:  
(510) 268-2101

[www.acphd.org](http://www.acphd.org)