

Breastfeeding and H1N1

After the birth of the baby, mothers should be encouraged to breastfeed early and often. Ideally, babies should receive most of their nutrition from breast milk. Eliminate unnecessary formula supplementation so the infant can receive as many maternal antibodies as possible. Mothers make antibodies to fight diseases they come into contact with since their milk is custom-made to fight diseases their babies are exposed to.

The risk for H1N1 influenza transmission through breast milk is unknown. However, reports of transmission with seasonal influenza infection are rare.

Can I continue to breastfeed if I have the H1N1 flu?

It is recommended that you continue to breastfeed and speak to your Health Care Provider about treatment. If you are breastfeeding and you catch the H1N1 flu virus you may be concerned about passing the virus onto your child. Breast milk contains antibodies and other substances that help protect a baby from infection. If you are ill with the H1N1 flu, you can express breast milk and have someone who is not sick feed your baby.

Can I continue to breastfeed if my baby has the H1N1 flu?

It is recommended that you continue to breastfeed your baby and speak to your baby's Health Care Provider. You may need to breastfeed more often when your baby is ill.

Can I continue to breastfeed while on anti-viral medication?

If you are prescribed antiviral medication it is recommended that you continue breastfeeding and speak to your Health Care Provider. Breast milk contains antibodies and other substances that help a baby fight off infections.

Added precautions:

Avoid crowds.

Wash hands well before feeding.

Mothers who are sick should consider wearing a mask during feedings and expressing their milk to be fed to the child by a healthy caregiver.

Mother should use a tissue to cover sneeze/cough then discard it and wash hands. Sneezing into arm/elbow is not recommended because of child's position during breastfeeding (face near upper arm)

Mother should avoid coughing/sneezing directly on the child, especially if she has been diagnosed with H1N1

Care should be taken not to contaminate breast pump parts, especially those parts which come in contact with the milk

Limit sharing of toys and other items that have been in infants' mouths. Thoroughly wash any items that have been in infants' mouths with soap and water.

Other family members should support mom with baby care and get immunized with the H1N1 vaccine

For any further questions contact our Parent Child Information Line at 541-7101 or 1-888-537-5741