

INFANT FEEDING during the coronavirus/ COVID-19 outbreak

All Breastfeeding Feeding Drop-ins in City and Hackney are currently suspended

Feeding support after you go home

From Monday 23rd March, we will be operating a **video and telephone breastfeeding support service**. The service will operate 7 days a week, 9am – 3pm.

The process for accessing support once you have been discharged home is as follows:

Email huh-tr.homertonbreastfeedingsupport@nhs.net and include the following details:

- your name, telephone number, and hospital number (this is a 6 digit number which can be found on the front of your blue notes)
- the date and approximate time of your baby's birth

Someone will be checking the inbox several times daily, every day, and we will aim to get back to everyone within 24hours at most.

If you are very worried about your baby's feeding and can't wait for a response, are very distressed, or don't have internet access/email, you can call us instead:

- Monday – Friday 8am – 3pm call the community midwifery office on 0208 510 5761
- Saturday and Sunday 8am – 12pm as above, 0208 510 5761
- Outside of these hours until 8pm every day, or if you cannot reach the community midwifery team, call the maternity helpline on 0208 510 5955
- Our postnatal ward team are available overnight for very urgent queries on 0208 510 7561

We are requesting that you email if possible. However, we are here if you need us on the telephone. We are committed to supporting you to feed your baby in the way that suits you and supporting your transition to parenthood.

The BFN have also suspended face to face contact Breastfeeding support and information available from **National Breastfeeding Helpline: 0300 100 0212 (help & support 365 days per year 9.30am-9.30pm)**.

Breastfeeding

If you are breastfeeding, continue breastfeeding as usual. If you are mix-feeding, try to boost the amount of breastmilk baby is getting, by breastfeeding frequently and/or expressing your breastmilk. Breastfeeding at night, responsive feeding and having frequent skin contact with baby all help to boost milk supply.

Breastfeeding and breast milk will help to protect your baby against infections. Constituents of breast milk help to boost baby's immune system and fight harmful pathogens.

COVID-19 has not been identified in breastmilk.

Public Health England (PHE) guidance

If you are breastfeeding while infected with Coronavirus/COVID-19

There is currently no clinical evidence to suggest that the virus can be transmitted through breastmilk. Infection can be spread to the baby in the same way as to anyone in close contact with you. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breastmilk or by being in close contact with your child; however this will be an individual decision and can be discussed with your midwife, health visitor, GP by phone.

If you wish to breastfeed, take precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19 to the baby by:

- washing your hands before touching your baby, breast pump or bottles
- avoiding coughing or sneezing on the baby while breastfeeding
- cleaning any breast pump as recommended by the manufacturer after each use
- consider asking someone who is well to feed your expressed breastmilk to the baby
- if you are feeding with formula or expressed milk, sterilise the equipment carefully before each use. You should not share bottles or breast pumps with someone else

Useful resources (leaflets & videos) to help with breastfeeding your baby:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/>

<https://globalhealthmedia.org/videos/breastfeeding/>

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/> (including drugs in breastmilk factsheets)

Formula feeding

It is important to wash and sterilise equipment according to current guidance.

It is recommended to responsively bottle feed your baby; pacing the feeds and limiting the number of people who feed your baby.

Useful information can be found here:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/bottle-feeding-resources/infant-formula-responsive-bottle-feeding-guide-for-parents/>

Accessing infant formula

Please see FAQs & information from First Steps Nutrition Trust:

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers>

Parents should be advised that stage 1 formula/ first infant formula should be used throughout the first year of baby's life.

If you cannot get your usual brand of first infant formula – don't worry – you can use any first infant formula. All first infant formulas have similar nutritional compositions to comply with legislation.

- do not use stage 2 infant formula for any baby under 6 months.
- if you are using follow-on formula but cannot access this, then use first infant formula
- if you are using other milks e.g. anti-reflux milks, comfort milks etc and cannot access these, then use first infant formula
- always make up the feeds as per manufacturers' guidance – do not be tempted to add more water to make it last longer. Diluting the milk could endanger your baby's health.

Supporting close and loving relationships

Babies need warm responsive relationships with their parents/carers. Keep babies close and respond to their need for food, love and comfort. This is essential for babies' health, wellbeing and development.

In addition, this enhances a mother's mental wellbeing in the postnatal period.

Information on how to build a happy baby:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/relationship-building-resources/building-a-happy-baby/>

Infant Feeding resources in other languages:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/foreign-language-resources/>