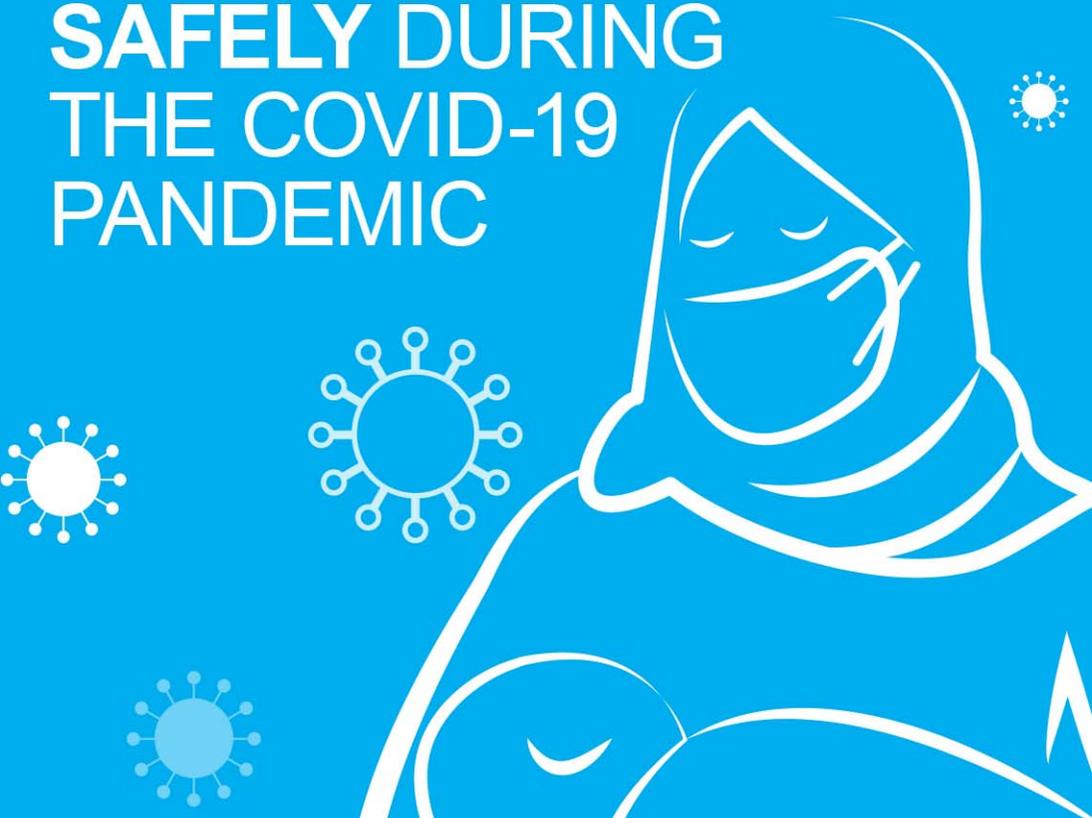


# BREASTFEEDING SAFELY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



## STRENGTHENING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN'S HEALTH STATUS

IN SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

**unicef**   
for every child



Co-funded by  
the Health Programme  
of the European Union



COMMISSARIAT  
FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRATION  
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

## BREASTFEEDING SAFELY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

If you're a mother or expecting, it is only natural to have questions about what is safest for your baby during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ✓ **Should I breastfeed during the pandemic?**

Absolutely. Breastmilk provides antibodies that give babies everywhere a healthy boost and protect them against many infections. Antibodies and bio-active factors in breastmilk may fight against COVID-19 infection, if a baby is exposed.

### ✓ **Can you pass COVID-19 to your baby by breastfeeding?**

To date, the transmission of active COVID-19 (virus that can cause infection) through breastmilk and breastfeeding has not been detected, though researchers are continuing to test breastmilk.

### ✓ **Should I breastfeed if I have or suspect I have COVID-19?**

Yes, continue breastfeeding with appropriate precautions. These include wearing a mask if available, washing your hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub before and after touching your baby, and routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces you have touched. Your chest only needs to be washed if you have just coughed on it. Otherwise, your breast does not need to be washed before every feeding.

### ✓ **What should I do if I'm too unwell to breastfeed?**

If you are feeling too sick to nurse, try to find other ways to safely provide your child with breastmilk. Try expressing milk and giving to your child via a clean cup or spoon. If you are feeling unable to feed your child, engage another family member to do this.

Expressing breastmilk is also important to sustain milk production so you can breastfeed your child again when you feel well enough to do so. There is no fixed time interval to wait after confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

### ✓ **Should I breastfeed if my child is sick?**

Continue to breastfeed your child. Whether your little one contracts COVID-19 or another illness, it is important to continue nourishing her with breastmilk. Breastfeeding boosts your baby's immune system, and your antibodies are passed to her through breastmilk, helping her to fight infections.

### ✓ **What precautions should I take when breastfeeding?**

Make sure to follow handwashing guidelines. Your hands should be washed with soap and water before and after touching your baby. You may also use an alcohol-based hand rub. It is also important to clean and disinfect any surfaces that you have touched. If experiencing any respiratory issues or suspected or confirmed positive COVID-19 – wear mask.

This leaflet is adapted version of the original material prepared in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health of Serbia and supported by the Ministry of Health

The content of this leaflet represents the views of the author(s) only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

**BREASTFEEDING  
SAFELY DURING  
THE COVID-19  
PANDEMIC**