HOW TO GET YOUR EXPRESSED BREAST MILK TO THE NICU AFTER YOU GO HOME FROM THE HOSPITAL WHEN YOU HAVE COVID-19

GOAL: COVID-19 Positive NICU parents will continue isolation at home after discharge from the hospital. They are encouraged to collect breastmilk and have it brought to the hospital.

In this handout, “you” means the COVID-19 Positive birth parent, also known as “lactating parent,” or “mother.”

How Do I Collect My Breast Milk at Home?

It is well known that breastmilk is full of ingredients that all work together to help babies develop a strong immune system and fight infections in their immediate environment. Breast-pumping or hand-expressing milk for your baby 8 times a day is strongly recommended. But care needs to be taken:

- We will send you home with sterile milk collection bottles (multiple days’ worth). Hard-sided containers are easier clean than breast milk collection bags.
- When not expressing your milk, keep your breasts covered so droplets from your nose and mouth don’t get on them. If these droplets do get on your breasts, wash your breasts with soap and water or a hand-sanitizing wipe.

Checklist for collecting your milk:

- Clean the surface where the milk collection containers will be placed before and after pumping. Use a sanitizing wipe (or if wipe unavailable, fresh solution of 1/8th teaspoon unscented household bleach in 2 cups of cool water--this solution expires after 24 hours).
- Wash your hands before expressing milk and put on a mask.
- Collect your milk by hand or by pump into clean syringes or bottles. Put a clean lid on the syringe/bottle promptly.
- Wipe the bottles down with sanitizing wipes, if available (or a fresh solution of 1/8th teaspoon unscented household bleach in 2 cups of cool water--this solution expires after 24 hours).
- Label syringes or bottles with patient stickers or tape, name/date/time.
- Place the sanitized bottles in a clean bag or storage container in your refrigerator (6 days) or freezer (6 months) until ready for pick/up and delivery to the hospital.
- If you are using a breast-pump, follow the directions for pump cleaning after each use. https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/breastpump.html

How Do I Get My Breast Milk To My Baby? (service available daily between 9AM-4PM)

- Arrange for someone who does not live in your home and does not have symptoms to pick up your milk and take it to the hospital. You can do this once a day or batch several days’ collections.
- Talk with your baby’s NICU nurse about how much milk to send to the hospital. Tell your baby’s nurse approximately when the milk will arrive. Your baby’s nurse will alert the lactation staff to expect this delivery.

Checklist for pick-up from your home and delivery to the hospital:

- When you are ready for your milk to be picked up, put the bottles in a brown paper bag or a clean plastic bag. If the bag is plastic, clean the outside of the bag with sanitizing wipes before placing the bag outside your door.
- Your support person (driver) picks up the milk without coming into your home or within 6 feet of others living in your home.
- The driver brings the milk to the hospital (1959 NE Pacific St, Seattle).
- When the driver arrives in the circle drive at the hospital’s main entrance, they call the lactation staff (206-598-9602). Wait in car for lactation staff to arrive.
- Lactation staff will meet the car at the main entrance with a clean patient belonging bag.
- The driver drops the bag of milk into the clean patient belonging bag held open by staff.

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