

WHO reports breastfeeding is essential even with covid-19

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- *International agency rules out covid-19 transmission by breastfeeding.*
- *Self-care measures should be applied when breastfeeding.*
- *In our country, breastfeeding has increased by 14.2% since 2012.*

Guadalajara, Jalisco, august 3, 2020.- Breastfeeding is the best way to provide the newborn with the necessary nutrients for proper development. In Mexico, according to the National Health and Nutrition Survey (ENSANUT) 2018, 95.6 percent of children under 2 years of age have been breastfed at some time but only 28.6 percent are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

As part of the World Breastfeeding Week held in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the WHO reported that one of the most relevant aspects is to continue promoting this activity because no active coronavirus has been found in the milk of any mother so far. Nevertheless, what has been proven is that breastfeeding improves the survival of newborns and infants while providing health and development benefits that last a lifetime, in addition to benefiting the health of the mother.

In the document "Breastfeeding and Covid-19 for Health Workers" published on the WHO official website last May 12, no scientific evidence of SARS-CoV-2 virus being transmitted through the parenteral canal, that is, through breast milk ingested by the child, is shown.

Regarding this matter, Dr. Maria de Lourdes Martinez Valle, Medical Advisor of PiSA Group, said that "breastfeeding is determinant for the newborn's good health. Besides the physical benefits, it also promotes emotional and psychological factors, establishing a bond between mother and child," said Martinez Valle.

The PiSA Group physician also added that it is very important for mothers who recently gave birth, to know that the WHO has reported babies can still be breastfed even if they have been diagnosed with Covid-19, by following general infection prevention and control (ICP) measures.

"Mothers who have been confirmed with Covid-19 or are under suspicion, should continue breastfeeding their babies as well as practicing skin-to-skin contact. Respiratory hygiene should be maintained and a mask should be worn to prevent droplets spreading. Hand washing should be done according to WHO recommendations before and after touching the child, and surfaces the mother has contact with should be constantly disinfected," said María de Lourdes Martinez Valle.

Should the mother have severe Covid-19 symptoms that prevent her from caring for and maintaining contact with her baby, Breast Milk Expression should be encouraged with all hygienic care.

"Mothers should be aware they should prioritize exclusive breastfeeding. If there are circumstances that do not allow the mother to come into contact with the baby, they should opt to express their milk. Infant formulas will always be the last option for newborns and must be indicated by the pediatrician taking into account the special needs of the infant," said Dr. Martinez Valle.

"Supporting breastfeeding contributes to a healthier planet" slogan was launched as part of the World Breastfeeding Week 2020 by the WHO to promote the practice.

During the last few years, breastfeeding figures have been increasing thanks to the WHO and the National Health System promotional campaigns. ENSANUT 2018 revealed that 40.2% of babies in our country under 6 months of age, are predominantly breastfed compared to 25% in 2012.

Source: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/breastfeeding-covid-who-fags-es-12may2020.pdf?sfvrsn=f1fdf92c_84