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There is no scientific evidence that breastmilk can spread the coronavirus. WHO recommends to continue breastfeeding.

In view of the situation with the new coronavirus (Covid-19) and the challenges it poses, the Ministry of Health explained that so far there is no scientific evidence to prove the transmission of the coronavirus through breastfeeding. The Technical Note No. 7/2020, by the Department of Strategic Programme Actions, Department of Primary Health Care of the Ministry of Health, Brazil, in partnership with other entities, provides clarifications on this subject.

The document signed by the Brazilian Network of Human Milk Banks, the Brazilian Society of Pediatricians (SBP), the Professor Fernando Figueira Institute of Integrated Medicine (IMIP), the São Paulo Health Institute (IS-SP), the Brazilian Association of Obstetricians and Obstetrical Nurses (Abenfo) and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), contains guidelines intended for the Coronavirus Emergency Operations Center (COE Covid-19).

The document recommends breastfeeding in cases of possible transmission of influenza syndromes. In view of the benefits of breastfeeding for the health of children and women, the absence of scientific evidence of any transmission of coronavirus through breastfeeding and that there is no recommendation to stop breastfeeding in cases of transmission of other respiratory viruses, the Ministry of Health recommends that breastfeeding be continued, even in cases of Covid-19 infection, as long as the mother wishes to breastfeed and is in adequate clinical conditions to do so.

One of the guidelines highlighted in the document is that if the mother does not feel comfortable offering the breast to her baby while she has the coronavirus, she should express her milk and give it to the child. Bearing in mind that an infected mother can transmit the virus through respiratory droplets during contact with the child, also while breastfeeding, the lactating mother should:

- wash her hands for at least 20 seconds before touching the baby or before expressing her breast milk (by hand or by pump);
- wear a face mask completely covering nose and mouth during feeds and avoid talking or coughing while breastfeeding;
- strictly follow instructions for cleaning the breast pump after each use;
- consider asking for help of someone who is healthy to offer her breastmilk to the baby, in a cup, or cup and spoon;
- make sure that the person who gives the breastmilk to the baby learns to do this from a health professional.

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