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Should infants be separated from COVID-19-positive mothers?

MARY ANN LIEBERT, INC./GENETIC ENGINEERING NEWS

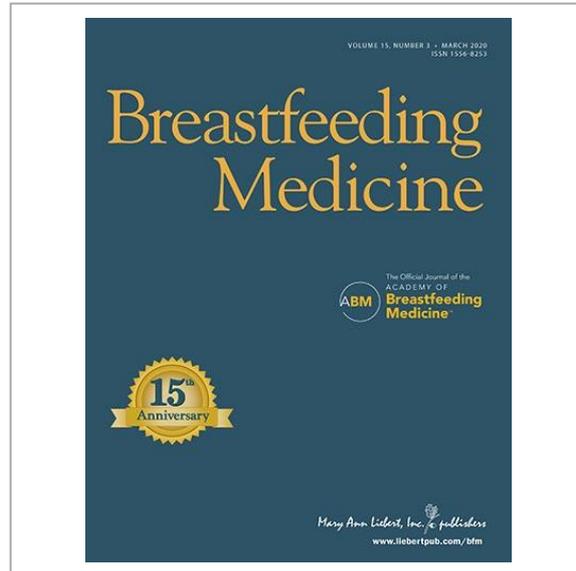


IMAGE: THE JOURNAL PUBLISHES ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPERS, REVIEWS, AND CASE STUDIES ON A BROAD SPECTRUM OF TOPICS IN LACTATION MEDICINE. [view more >](#)

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New Rochelle, NY, April 9, 2020--In a new commentary, Alison Stuebe, MD, President of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, addresses the risks and benefits of separating infants from COVID-19-positive mothers following birth. Although multiple public health organizations recommended keeping mothers and infants together, the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises facilities to consider separating mothers and babies temporarily until the mother is no longer contagious, and recommends that the risks and benefits of temporary separation should be discussed with the mother by the healthcare team.

In her commentary, Dr. Stuebe, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and distinguished professor in infant and young child feeding at the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, notes that there is no evidence to show that early separation of infants and mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 improves outcomes. While separation may minimize the risk of transmission of the virus from mother to infant during the hospital stay, it has potential negative consequences for both mother and infant, according to the commentary published in *Breastfeeding Medicine*, the official journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine published by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers. Click here to read the protocol free on the *Breastfeeding Medicine* website.

Dr. Stuebe outlines several risks of separating mothers and infants in the hospital, which disrupts breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact during the critical hours and days following birth. For example, infants who lack skin-to-skin contact with their mothers tend to have higher heart rates and respiratory

rates and lower glucose levels. The separation also stresses the mother, which could make it more difficult for her to fight off the viral infection. In addition, separation interferes with the provision of maternal milk to the infant, which is important for the development of the infant's immune system. Separation also disrupts breastfeeding, which puts the infant at increased risk of severe respiratory infections, including pneumonia and COVID-19.

"As we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic," Stuebe writes, "I am hopeful that we can center mothers and babies and remember to first do no harm."

Arthur I. Eidelman, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Breastfeeding Medicine*, concurs that "there is no need or indication to categorically separate infants from COVID-19 suspect or positive mothers other than in circumstances wherein the mother's medical condition precludes her caring for the infant. Feeding mothers' own breast milk, either by nursing or by feeding of expressed milk, is OK and desired!"

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About the Journal

Breastfeeding Medicine, the official journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, is an authoritative, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journal published 10 times per year in print and online. The Journal publishes original scientific papers, reviews, and case studies on a broad spectrum of topics in lactation medicine. It presents evidence-based research advances and explores the immediate and long-term outcomes of breastfeeding, including the epidemiologic, physiologic, and psychological benefits of breastfeeding. Tables of content and a sample issue may be viewed on the *Breastfeeding Medicine* website.

About the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) is a worldwide organization of medical doctors dedicated to the promotion, protection, and support of breastfeeding. Our mission is to unite members of the various medical specialties with this common purpose. For more than 20 years, ABM has been bringing doctors together to provide evidence-based solutions to the challenges facing breastfeeding across the globe. A vast body of research has demonstrated significant nutritional, physiological, and psychological benefits for both mothers and children that last well beyond infancy. But while breastfeeding is the foundation of a lifetime of health and well-being, clinical practice lags behind scientific evidence. By building on our legacy of research into this field and sharing it with the broader medical community, we can overcome barriers, influence health policies, and change behaviors.

About the Publisher

Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers is a privately held, fully integrated media company known for establishing authoritative peer-reviewed journals in many promising areas of science and biomedical research, including *Journal of Women's Health*, *Childhood Obesity*, and *Pediatric Allergy, Immunology, and Pulmonology*. Its biotechnology trade magazine, *GEN (Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News)* was the first in its field and is today the industry's most widely read publication worldwide. A complete list of the firm's 90 journals, books, and newsmagazines is available on the Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publisher's website.

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