



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Moms can breastfeed when sick**

*Breastfeeding helps keep babies healthy!*

**Eau Claire, WI, January 24, 2018** – “Can I breastfeed my baby when I’m sick?” Many new moms worry about feeding their baby breastmilk when they are sick with a cold or flu. In most cases, **the best thing a mom can do for her baby is to breastfeed when she is sick with a common illness.**

The World Health Organization recommends women give their babies only breastmilk for the first six months and continue to breastfeed until two years of age and beyond. In Wisconsin, only one in five babies is fed breastmilk for their first six months of life. Unfortunately, one of the top reasons moms quit breastfeeding includes worries that their breastmilk isn’t safe for their baby when they are sick or taking a medication.

Breastmilk will not give common illnesses to a baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) only recommend mothers who are infected with HIV not to breastfeed. Breastfed babies get sick less often and less severely than babies who are not breastfed.

When you have a contagious illness like a cold, flu, or mild virus, your baby was exposed to the illness before you even knew you were sick. Breastmilk contains antibodies that are specific to your illness and will help prevent your baby from getting sick. If your baby does get sick, he or she most likely will not be as sick as you are.

**This cold and flu season, you can take measures to prevent your baby from getting sick:**

- Keep breastfeeding!
- Wash your hands often.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Don’t cough or sneeze near the baby and limit face-to-face contact.
- Ask your pharmacist, doctor, or lactation consultant about medications that are safe to take while breastfeeding.
- If you cannot nurse your baby, use a breast pump to express breastmilk often. Have a healthy adult feed your baby the expressed milk from a bottle.
- Get a flu shot. You can breastfeed even if you have just gotten a flu shot.
- Flu can be very serious in young babies. If your baby gets sick, call your doctor right away.



For questions about breastfeeding, contact the Eau Claire City-County Health Department WIC Program at 715-839-5051 or visit: <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/health-department/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support>

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