

Covid-19 related to coronavirus SARS CoV-2
Position of the French human milk banks association (ADLF)

The development of the SARS CoV-2 virus, responsible for Covid-19 disease, is currently evolving rapidly and the question arises concerning breast milk donors and the treatment of breast milk in human milk banks.

- Regarding **SARS CoV-2 coronavirus infection**:
 - It is an infection with respiratory transmission by close contact (less than one meter at the time of a cough). As with other respiratory viruses, human-to-human transmission is possible for a few hours before *symptoms* appear. Incubation times are estimated to date between 2 and 12 days. This justifies all the precautions which are recommended by the health authorities in order to limit the transmission of the virus (<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>).
- Regarding **breast milk donation**:
 - ✓ It is absolutely essential for premature infants, as it significantly reduces the risk of serious complications related to prematurity, in the short and long term. There are major health benefits for these high-risk infants.
 - ✓ It is organized and supported by the French human milk banks (<https://association-des-lactariums-de-france.fr/carte-des-lactariums/>) which all respect common rules concerning the selection of donors based on a health questionnaire and on blood sampling (hepatitis, HIV, HTLV), as well as the handling and treatment of milk by pasteurization (62.5 °C for 30 min), in accordance with the official *Guide to good practice* published in the official journal of the French Republic (*Guide to good practice 2008*).
- Regarding **breast milk and SARS CoV-2**:
 - ✓ It is not yet known whether SARS CoV-2 can be found in breast milk and whether it would be contagious if it were.
 - ✓ Other coronaviruses are destroyed by pasteurization and it is very likely that, even if SARS CoV-2 was present in breast milk, it is also destroyed by pasteurization (*Duan et al. 2003*).
 - ✓ Taking into account the available information, French human milk banks have added to the health questionnaire a specific question concerning the presence of a risk exposure in the 14 days preceding the start of these, namely:
 - Symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (fever, cough, etc.)
 - Close contact with a confirmed case of SARS CoV-2 infection during its symptomatic phase
 - Stay or transit in the risk zone (when situation is not yet epidemic)In these cases, it is recommended to temporarily suspend the donation (or not to recruit), in order to ensure that these mothers do not fall ill during this period of time. Throughout the period when they are sick or suspect, they remain excluded from the donation. If the diagnosis is not confirmed or the symptoms have gone, they can resume donation.
- Regarding **the treatment of milk from a mother to her own infant**:
 - Since breastfeeding is considered possible in covid19 or suspect mothers, human milk banks can continue to pasteurize this own mother's milk when needed.
- Regarding **hygiene in human milk banks**
 - ✓ The importance of respecting strict hygiene rules when collecting, storing and handling milk is fundamental. Donors are well informed about these rules and professionals working in human milk banks are trained to respect these rules.
 - ✓ Before entering the human milk bank, the professionals working there must notify the human milk banks manager if they have stayed in or transited through a risk zone or been in contact with a person infected with SARS CoV2.

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Available information is subject to change and this document will be updated accordingly

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