Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding and HIV: Supporting Informed Choices [1]

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Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding and HIV: Supporting Informed Choices

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The Issue

Breastfeeding while taking HIV drugs is the standard of care for women and other parents living with HIV in resource-limited areas of the world. It has been shown to increase survival and well-being of their babies, and the risk of HIV transmission with this method is extremely low. However, in high-resource settings like the United States and Canada, HIV and public health guidelines oppose breastfeeding among women living with HIV. These guidelines address neither the potential health benefits of breastfeeding, nor the potential health risks to parent and child of not breastfeeding. The information available can be confusing for those who may want to explore the option of breast/chestfeeding.

Over the past several years, The Well Project has created and curated many articles, events, and other resources to provide access to a range of information, based on research findings and expert experience, than can support parents living with HIV in their infant-feeding decision making. Below is a list of our resources on this topic, which we will continue to add to as they are developed. We recognize and are responding to the need for programming to advance research, policy, and educational resources for women and other parents living with HIV and the providers, professionals, and others who care for them.
BEEEBAH (Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV) [2] is a comprehensive, multi-tiered three-year project expanding upon The Well Project’s efforts to increase knowledge and access to information around breast/chestfeeding and HIV.

**LEARN MORE & CHECK PAGE OFTEN FOR BEEEBAH UPDATES!** [2]

**Articles and Fact Sheets**

- [HIV Treatment Guidelines for Pregnant People and Their Infants](https://www.thewellproject.org) [3] (fact sheet)
- [Can I Breastfeed While Living With HIV? An Overview of Infant Feeding Options](https://www.thewellproject.org) [4] (fact sheet)
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Published on The Well Project
(https://www.thewellproject.org)

- ¿Puedo amamantar mientras vivo con VIH? Un resumen de opciones de alimentación infantil [5] (hoja informativa)
- The Well Project at Adherence 2019 [8] (session poster)

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**Expert Consensus Statement on Breastfeeding and HIV in the United States and Canada**

The *Expert Consensus Statement on Breastfeeding and HIV in the United States and Canada* [9] affirms the agency of women and parents living with HIV – and the urgency of including them at all levels in HIV research, education, and policy.

**READ MORE & SIGN ON TODAY!** [9]

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**Reports and Resources**

- Resources to Talk to Your Provider about Breastfeeding and HIV [10] (discussion guide)
- Women and HIV Infant-Feeding Resources Compiled by The Well Project [11]
- List of US-Based Providers who Support Informed Infant Feeding Choices for Parents with HIV [12] (fill out the form in this article if you believe your practice/organization belongs on this list)
- WRI 2018 - Undetectable=Untransmittable: Contextualizing a Campaign in the Lives of Women Living with and Vulnerable to HIV [13] (annual research meeting report)
Interested in engaging in conversation or sharing insights or updates related to HIV and infant feeding (including breast/chestfeeding)? Email oford@thewellproject.org [14] to be added to the growing HIV and Infant Feeding listserv!

Breast/Chestfeeding Infographics

Click the images below to save and share as jpeg images
Did you know?

If a woman living with HIV has a sustained UNDETECTABLE VIRAL LOAD, the chance of transmitting HIV through breastfeeding IS LESS THAN 1%.

While US guidelines don’t recommend breastfeeding with HIV, they DO recommend PROVIDERS SUPPORT A PARENT’S DECISION TO BREASTFEED.

Source: HHS Perinatal HIV Treatment Guidelines

BUILDING EQUITY, ETHICS, AND EDUCATION ON BREASTFEEDING AND HIV (BEEEBAH)
How can parents living with HIV help keep their babies HIV-negative while breast/chestfeeding?

- Taking HIV medications as prescribed
- Early planning with health care team
- Attending all health care appointments for parent and baby
- Preventative medication to baby after birth
- Maintaining an undetectable viral load
- Support, support, support!

BUILDING EQUITY, ETHICS, AND EDUCATION ON BREASTFEEDING AND HIV (BEEBAH)
When a parent living with HIV chooses to breast/chestfeed, support is fundamental!

“All I wanted to do was feed my baby. I was not seeking approval, I just needed support.”

– Breastfeeding mother living with HIV

BUILDING EQUITY, ETHICS, AND EDUCATION ON BREASTFEEDING AND HIV (BEEEBAH)

Personal Stories

- Spotlight on Heather O'Connor: My Journey with Breastfeeding and HIV [18]
- Liquid Gold [19] (Part 1)
- Gold-ish Liquid [20] (Part 2)

Videos and Presentations

- Breast/Chestfeeding and HIV in the US: A Listening Session with National Advocates [22] (webinar in honor of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day featuring women...
leaders from US-based organizations providing advocacy updates related to infant feeding and HIV

- **The Big Picture: Health Implications and Bioethical Considerations of Breastfeeding and HIV** [23] (expert conversation featuring Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin and Marielle Gross, MD, MBE, of the university of Pittsburgh and Johns Hopkins)
- **Breastfeeding and HIV: Viewpoints from an Adult and Pediatric Provider** [24] (expert conversation featuring Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin and Allison Agwu, MD, of Johns Hopkins) (see video below)

- **Breastfeeding and HIV in the U=U Era: Advancing Conversation and Community Awareness** [25] (webinar discussion on the intersection of HIV, infant feeding, and criminalization)
- **A Girl Like Me LIVE Episode 6: Breastfeeding and HIV with Ciara "Ci Ci" Covin and Heather O'Connor** [26]
- **We need to talk about breastfeeding and HIV** [27] (panel discussion led by ViiV Healthcare and featuring Ci Ci Covin, Program Coordinator for The Well Project)
- **Breastfeeding & HIV in the US and Canada: Centering Women's Lived Experiences Into the Clinical, Research and Policy Discussion** [28] (virtual conference presentation)
- **Breastfeeding and HIV: What We Know and Considerations for Informed Choices** [29] (December 2018 webinar)

### Order Materials

"Get the Facts on Breast/Chestfeeding and HIV" Pamphlet; [30] Get key facts about breast/chestfeeding and HIV at your fingertips! From snapshots of the latest research and current guidelines to a direct link for support in talking with providers about infant feeding, this pocket-sized folding pamphlet packs vital information into an attractive, readable format. The pamphlet is a helpful resource to share at conferences and community events, in clinic waiting rooms – anywhere women and other potential parents living with HIV are served.
Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding and HIV: Supporting Informed Choices

How can parents living with HIV help keep their babies HIV-negative while breast/chestfeeding?

- Early planning with healthcare team
- Prevention methods before and after breastfeeding
- Support from a trusted network
- Exclusive breast/chestfeeding up to a month

When a parent living with HIV chooses to breast/chestfeed, support is fundamental!

- Providers
- Peers
- Family members
- Mental health professionals
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
- Co-Parents

All I wanted to do was feed my baby. I was not seeking approval, I just needed support.

—Ciarra Covin

Support from my infectious disease doctor and partner is what allowed me to be successful in breastfeeding both of my children.

—Heather O’Connor

As a woman born with HIV, I can tell you how vital it is to empower women living with HIV to feel free to have children and feed them as they see best.

—Porsha Dennis

Tools to help you talk to your provider

Scan the QR code to access talking points and other resources that can support conversations with your providers about your infant-feeding options.

www.thewellproject.org

Visit The Well Project to access evidence-based fact sheets and other educational programming; community support; advocacy and leadership development; collaborative engagement; and women-focused research!

Join our dynamic community of women living with and vulnerable to HIV at: www.thewellproject.org

Facebook: thewellproject
Twitter: thewellprojecttv

BBEEBAH (Building Equity, Ethics, and Education on Breastfeeding and HIV) is supported by a grant from V2V Healthcare’s Positive Action for Women Initiative.
Click the image above to save as a jpeg or share online; or download a printable pdf of this resource

FILL OUT THIS FORM TO HAVE FREE COPIES OF THIS PAMPHLET SHIPPED TO YOUR ORGANIZATION OR PRACTICE!

Tags:

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