

Milk Handling for COVID-19 Positive or Suspected Mothers in the Hospital Setting

Lactation Support: The CDC encourages shared decision making between the mother and her healthcare team when determining if baby will be temporarily separated or will room in with mom¹. If the baby is rooming in, support mom to breastfeed directly after performing hand hygiene and putting on a face mask. If the infant is temporarily separated from mom, provide a dedicated pump that is disinfected after each use per manufacturer's recommendations. Pump parts should be thoroughly washed after each use per CDC guidelines². Encourage proper hand hygiene before and after each pumping session. The CDC does not recommend disinfecting human milk containers after pumping. HMBANA supports this guidance and recommends a simple **Bottle Transfer Technique** to transport to the baby.

Bottle Transfer Technique: During routine care, the nurse who cares for the mother performs hand hygiene and dons PPE. The nurse picks up the milk storage container(s) with one clean, gloved hand and opens the patient's door with their other hand. They simply drop the bottles into a clean storage bag being held open by a second "clean" nurse who is standing outside of the room. The clean nurse transports the bag to the nursery or caregiver for use. If your hospital's infection control team requires additional precautions, use the **Aseptic Milk Transfer Technique** to safely transfer milk to a new storage container. Please note, the **Bottle Transfer Technique** is the preferred method to protect the quantity and quality of mom's milk (e.g. potential fat loss when transferring colostrum).

Chemical Disinfection: It is unnecessary and unsafe to apply chemical disinfectants to milk storage containers. Hospital disinfectants provide broad antimicrobial action on medical equipment and high touch surfaces. Human milk containers, like other patient nutrition items, are NOT high touch surfaces³. Generally speaking, disinfectants contain EPA registered labels that prohibit their use on food or food contact surfaces. HMBANA supports the CDC's guidance, which instructs hospitals to use disinfectants on high touch surfaces (e.g. bed rails, IV pumps) and to clean food contact surfaces with **routine** sanitation procedures⁴. If your infection control team requires the use of a chemical disinfectant, work with your nutrition and environmental health departments to identify a disinfectant that is safe to use on food contact surfaces. Follow manufacturer's guidelines for use. Some chemical disinfectants require a water rinse after application. High or intermediate concentrations of sodium hypochlorite (0.1%-0.5% bleach solution) should never be used on food contact surfaces⁵.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Interim considerations for infection prevention and control of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in inpatient obstetric healthcare settings. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). How to keep your breast pump kit clean: The essentials. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/breastpump.html>
3. Huslage et al. (2010). A Quantitative Approach to Defining "High-Touch" Surfaces in Hospitals. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol*, 31 (8), 850-853.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Interim infection prevention and control recommendations for patients with suspected or confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in healthcare settings. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
5. Food and Drug Administration. (2020). FDA Title 21, Chapter I, Subchapter B, Part 178, Subpart B, 178.1010: Sanitizing Solutions.

Aseptic Milk Transfer Technique* If your infection control team requires additional precautions, you may simply transfer milk from the original container into a new, clean container. This technique may be performed by one healthcare provider in the patient’s room.

1. Before entering mom’s room, pack one large plastic storage bag with clean supplies (Figure 1). Perform hand hygiene and don PPE before entering room. Place bag on counter or table.

2. Disinfect a workspace (bedside table or counter). Create “original” field (Figure 2). Open large plastic bag that contains new storage containers, but leave the containers inside. Perform hand hygiene and don new gloves. Create “new” (clean) field (Figure 2).

3. Use clean paper towel from the new field to remove the cap from mom’s original bottle. Use paper towel to grab original bottle and pour contents into new, clean bottle (Figure 3). If milk volume is small, transfer milk into an oral feeding syringe.

4. Transport clean storage bag with new milk storage containers to neonatal unit. Storage containers do not require any additional precautions. Do not apply chemical disinfectant to milk storage containers.



*Please note, **The Bottle Transfer Technique** is the preferred method for transferring milk to baby.



Figure 1. Supplies

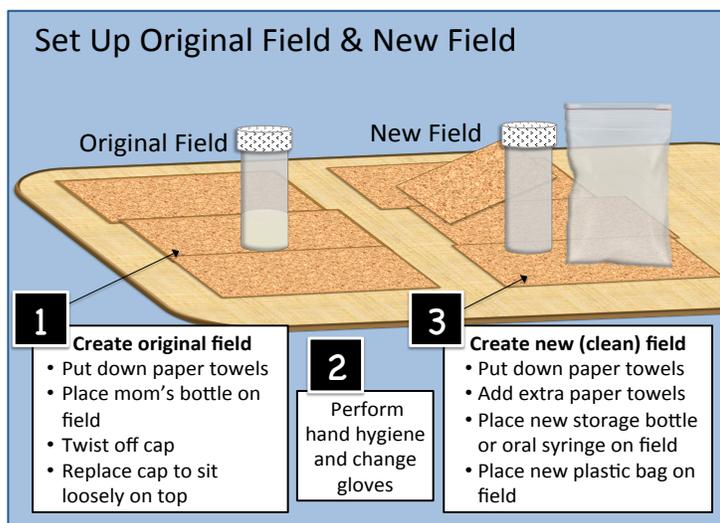


Figure 2. Original & New Fields

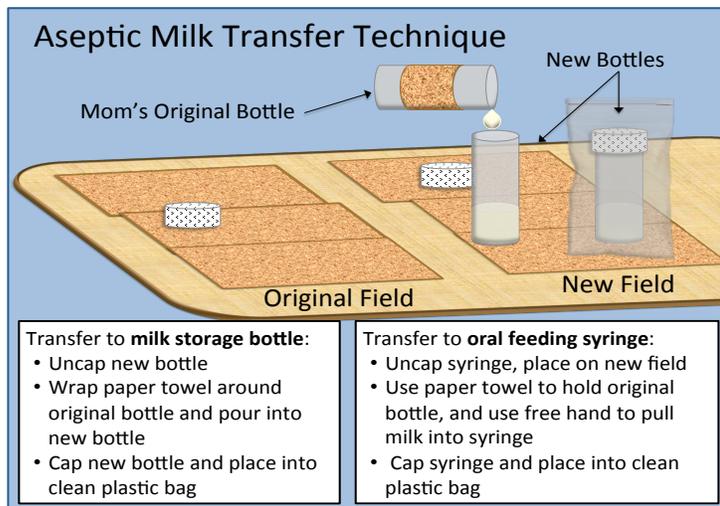


Figure 3. Aseptic Milk Transfer