Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding and HIV: Supporting Informed Choices

The Well Project compiled all our programs (including fact sheets, presentations, and more) on the crucial topic of infant feeding and HIV in this new resource page.

August 13, 2021 By The Well Project

This post originally appeared on and can be read in its entirety at The Well Project.

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.

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

Articles and Fact Sheets

- Can I Breastfeed While Living With HIV? An Overview of Infant Feeding Options (fact sheet)
- ¿Puedo amamantar mientras vivo con VIH? Un resumen de opciones de alimentación infantil (hoja informativa)
- Breastfeeding and HIV in the Era of U=U: Highlights from a Growing Discussion (conference workshop summary)
- Conversations at Adherence 2019: Advancing Discussions of Infant Feeding Choices in the U=U Era (perspectives article)
- The Well Project at Adherence 2019 (session poster)

Reports and Resources

- Expert Consensus Statement on Breastfeeding and HIV in the United States and Canada (statement with background and sign-on form)
- Women and HIV Infant-Feeding Resources Compiled by The Well Project
- List of US-Based Providers who Support Informed Infant Feeding Choices for Parents with HIV (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 (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 to be added to the growing HIV and Infant Feeding listserv!

Personal Stories

- Spotlight on Heather O'Connor: My Journey with Breastfeeding and HIV
- Liquid Gold

"We need to talk about breastfeeding and HIV": Ci Ci Covin, Program Coordinator for The Well Project, shares her thoughts and experiences on breastfeeding and HIV in this panel discussion led by ViiV Healthcare.

- Breastfeeding & HIV in the US and Canada: Centering Women's Lived Experiences Into the Clinical, Research and Policy Discussion (virtual conference presentation)
- Breastfeeding and HIV: What We Know and Considerations for Informed Choices (December 2018 webinar)
- A Girl Like Me LIVE Episode 6: Breastfeeding and HIV with Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin and Heather O'Connor

The Well Project is a non-profit organization whose mission is to change the course of the HIV/AIDS pandemic through a unique and comprehensive focus on women and girls. Visit their website, https://www.thewellproject.org/, to access fact sheets (English and Spanish), blogs, and advocacy tools, and to join a global community of women living with HIV.

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