

The Potential Effects of Alcohol, Caffeine, or Marijuana while Breastfeeding

Alcohol

- If there is alcohol in your bloodstream, then there is alcohol in your breastmilk.
- It is recommended that you wait at least 4 hours after drinking alcohol before breastfeeding or storing pumped breastmilk.
- “Pumping and dumping”, or pumping and throwing away the breast milk, does not remove the alcohol faster.
- Alcohol does not increase milk production.
- Long term alcohol consumption may reduce your milk supply.

Caffeine

- Many teas, sodas, chocolate, and coffee contain caffeine.
- Moderate caffeine consumption (up to 3 servings per day) is acceptable while breastfeeding or pumping breast milk.
- If you notice that your baby is fussier than usual after you have caffeine, consider decreasing your caffeine consumption.

Marijuana

We do not recommend using marijuana while breastfeeding.

- Marijuana has many chemicals that can harm developing babies and young children.
- The potency of marijuana available now is higher than it was a decade ago.
- The marijuana plant may also be treated with pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, and fertilizers that are toxic to developing babies and young children.
- THC (the psychoactive compound in marijuana) crosses the placenta and enters breastmilk.

- Research on the safety of THC in babies and children is limited.
- THC is attracted to fat and is stored in the fat of the developing baby which may affect brain development.

If you are using marijuana to treat a medical condition such as nausea, anxiety, or pain, please talk to your health care provider about other options that may be safer for your baby.

Safety tips:

- It is **not safe** to be intoxicated (high, drunk or “buzzed”) while caring for your infant or child.
- It is **never safe** to sleep with your baby. If you are intoxicated, you are more likely to fall asleep with your baby and you might roll onto and suffocate them.
- It is **not safe** for you or your baby to ride in a car with an intoxicated (high, drunk or “buzzed”) driver.
- It is **not safe** for anyone to smoke or vape around your baby.

Where can I find more information?

- *Breastfeeding: Alcohol* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):
<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/vaccinations-medications-drugs/alcohol.html>
- *Breastfeeding: Marijuana* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):
<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/vaccinations-medications-drugs/marijuana.html>
- *Is it safe for a breastfeeding mom to use marijuana?* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):
<https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/faqs/breastfeeding-while-using-marijuana.html>

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