

What about drinking alcohol?

Alcohol does pass into breast milk and the amount in milk are similar to the mother's level in her blood.

Alcohol can reduce milk let down.

We know alcohol has caused concerns with sleep, feeding, and weight gain in breastfed babies.

We don't know what effects alcohol might have on a baby's future health.

We do not recommend alcohol in breastfeeding, but **occasional use** is not expected to be harmful if the mother waits at **least 2 hours** before breastfeeding (Occasional use is no more than 1 standard drink in a day).

To learn more about alcohol, breastfeeding, and timing how to safely breastfeed, go to resources.beststart.org and search 'Mixing Alcohol and Breastfeeding' or scan this QR code*



What about using cannabis, hashish, or hash oil?

Cannabis does pass into breast milk. We do not know how these substances will affect your baby's future health.

We **do not** recommend breastfeeding when using cannabis for recreational or medicinal use.

If you are using cannabis to manage a medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider about other medicines that are safe for breastfeeding.

To learn more about cannabis and breastfeeding, go to pregnancyinfo.ca/learn-more or scan this QR code



Remember: Many medicines and substances pass into breast milk and could affect your baby's health.

For more information

If you have any questions about this information or other medicines you are taking, talk to your healthcare provider.

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

Catalogue #266005 (February 2020)
To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Opioid Agonist Therapy and Substance Use In Breastfeeding



CCOIPublicDomain/Pictures/Pixabay.com

If you use medications or substances, you might be wondering how to breast feed safely.



*A QR code (short for 'quick response' code) is a type of barcode that you scan with your smart device's camera. Once scanned, it takes you to that web page.

Opioid Agonist Therapy

These are medicines prescribed to treat opioid addiction. They help control cravings and reduce the use of other substances.

Examples

- methadone
- buprenorphine (Subutex)
- buprenorphine plus naloxone (Suboxone)

If I am taking Opioid Agonist Therapy, can I breastfeed?

Yes, you can and we recommend you do.

While these medicines do pass into breast milk, they are safe in breastfeeding. The small amount of medicine that enters breast milk can help baby's transition after birth and lessen the effects of withdrawal. Skin to skin, cuddles, and being responsive to your baby's needs are other ways you can comfort your baby to lessen the effects of withdrawal.

When might my baby need help?

If your baby is having trouble eating, sleeping, or being consoled, talk to your healthcare provider.

If you are not able to be with your baby, hand express or pump breast milk to feed to your baby. This helps you establish and maintain your milk supply.

If you decide to stop breastfeeding, talk to your healthcare provider. You will need to slowly wean your baby. This helps lessen the effects of withdrawal.

If you are using any of these medicines without a prescription or intend to use other substances as well, we **do not** recommend breastfeeding.

Substance use

Substance use is the use of street or recreational drugs and/or prescription medicines not prescribed for you.

Some examples

- cocaine, crack
- heroin
- fentanyl
- oxycodone
- codeine
- morphine
- methadone
- MDMA (ecstasy)
- carfentanil
- methamphetamine (crystal meth)
- amphetamines (e.g. Ritalin)
- benzodiazepines (e.g. lorazepam, clonazepam, diazepam)

A note about injecting substances

You have a greater chance of getting HIV/AIDS if you inject substances. There is still a chance even if you use 'clean' needles or you share needles or cookers with someone who says they are "HIV free".

HIV can be passed from mother to baby through breast milk. If you are injecting substances or have a lifestyle that increases the chance of you being exposed to HIV, we **do not** recommend that you breastfeed your baby.

Do these substances affect my breast milk and my baby?

Many substances can pass into breast milk and can affect your baby's health. It is hard to know how much of the substance your baby might get from breast milk.

Substances that do not come from a pharmacy can have other harmful ingredients that can affect your baby's health.

We know some substances have caused short-term side effects in breastfed babies like being sleepy. Other substances have caused serious side effects such as seizures or trouble breathing.

We don't know what effects these substances might have on a baby's future health.

If you use any substance, ask how you can safely breastfeed your baby.