

BREASTFEEDING & SUBSTANCES

You may be wondering **what is safe to use while you are breastfeeding, including caffeine, alcohol, and more.** If you are having difficulty avoiding using any of these substances, talk to your health care provider. There are resources that you can be connected to for support and recommendations around how best to feed your baby.

ALCOHOL

It is **safest to avoid alcohol consumption while breastfeeding.** Alcohol is transferred into breast milk and will be ingested by your baby, which can impact your baby's health.

If you do drink alcohol while breastfeeding, it is safest not to **exceed 2 drinks** in one sitting. Consider feeding your baby (or pumping) **right before consuming alcohol.** To be safest, wait at least 2 hours after each drink to feed your baby.

CANNABIS

Cannabis should be not be used while breastfeeding, as there is very limited data on the impact that it has on a nursing baby. THC (the 'psychoactive' part of cannabis) is transferred into breast milk. 'Pumping and dumping' your milk **does not protect your baby against exposure to THC.**

If you are having trouble abstaining entirely, you should **decrease your use as much as possible** and **use cannabis with less THC** because this may reduce the risk of any impacts on your baby.

CAFFEINE

A moderate amount of caffeine while breastfeeding is typically considered safe. Limiting caffeine to 200mg per day is recommended.

OPIOIDS

Breastfeeding parents who are taking **prescribed opioids for chronic pain** or who are using **stable doses of opioid agonist therapy** (e.g., methadone, buprenorphine-naloxone, etc.) can **typically breastfeed safely.** There are some exceptions to this and you should **speak to your health care provider** for more information prior to starting breastfeeding.

If you are taking **non-prescribed opioids,** it is **not safe to breastfeed.** Talk to your health care provider for more information and support.

CIGARETTES/VAPING

It is best to **avoid smoking and vaping while breastfeeding.** Nicotine transfers into breast milk. It can impact your baby's health and reduce breast milk quantity by **lowering prolactin** (the hormone that causes release of breast milk).

If you are having trouble avoiding smoking, try to smoke **right after** breastfeeding, use a nicotine **patch,** **only smoke outdoors,** wash your hands/change your clothes before touching your baby, and **avoid sharing a bed** with your baby.

OTHER SUBSTANCES

If you are using any other substances or 'street drugs', talk to your health care provider for more information.

References

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