

# Planning for Safe Breastfeeding

Your breastmilk naturally meets your baby's needs. Yet, what you eat and drink can pass into your milk which could affect your baby when breastfeeding.

By making sure you are using the best practices in your lifestyle when breastfeeding your baby, you can help lower your baby's risk as they get older of developing asthma, type 1 diabetes, obesity, ear infections, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and many more conditions<sup>5</sup>.

## Here are some recommendations to help you plan for a safe breastfeeding journey:

### Medications

Although many medications do pass into breast milk, most have little or no impact when taken as directed and are safe to use when breastfeeding<sup>1</sup>.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, make sure your health care provider is aware so they can answer any questions and help you when it comes to your medications.

### Smoking/Tobacco (this also includes e-cigarettes)

Nicotine and other harmful chemicals are found in cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco. Smoking or using tobacco while breastfeeding can allow harmful chemicals to pass from your breastmilk to your baby. This is true whether you use tobacco yourself or you are just around secondhand smoke. If you are breastfeeding or using infant formula and your home smells like smoke, your baby may have an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), as well as pneumonia and ear infections<sup>5-6</sup>.

Quitting is always recommended, but we also understand that it can be challenging. If you decide to quit, nicotine patches and gum are okay to use for breastfeeding mothers. Visit [Avera.org/Childrens](http://Avera.org/Childrens) for parenting resources to help you get started.



If you decide to continue smoking, breastfeed your baby first, then go outside the home and away from your baby (this will help reduce the amount of nicotine that is in the breastmilk). When you are done smoking, make sure to wash your hands with soap and water, change into different clothes that don't have any smoke smell before interacting with your baby. When you smoke, your milk supply may also decrease.

**Risks to your Baby:** Rapid heart rate, diarrhea, vomiting, ear infections



### Caffeine

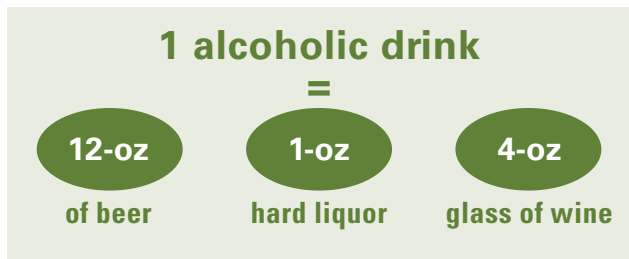
Try to limit your caffeine drinks when possible as long as you are breastfeeding. Consuming 300-500 milligrams per day is considered safe. A standard 8 ounce (1 cup) black coffee is about 96 milligrams. High levels of caffeine are found in breastmilk 1– 2 hours after drinking your beverage.

**Risks to your Baby:** Crying or fussiness that is not easy to calm, poor sleeping patterns



## Alcohol

Not drinking alcohol is the safest option when you are breastfeeding. However, drinking a small amount of up to 1 standard drink<sup>4</sup> per day should be considered safe. If you decide to have a drink, a good rule to follow is, for every standard alcoholic drink you have, it'll take a minimum of 2 hours for each drink to get out of your blood and out of your breastmilk.



Pumping milk after drinking alcohol, and then throwing it away, also known as “pumping and dumping”, does NOT reduce the amount of alcohol in your breastmilk quicker. The level of alcohol in your blood is what the level of alcohol will be in your breastmilk.

If you have concerns or struggle with alcohol use, talk to your doctor.

**Risks to your Baby:** Over-sleepiness and hard to wake up, poor feeding, different milk taste.

## DO NOT USE the following during breastfeeding:

Talk to your doctor for additional support if you have questions or need help with quitting.

### Cannabis, Marijuana, Hemp, THC and CBD

As long as you are breastfeeding, you should not use products (even prescriptions) that have THC, including those containing CBD<sup>7</sup>, to limit potential risks to your baby. THC and CBD chemicals can be found in marijuana and hemp. There may be serious risks when using cannabis products that include THC and/or CBD. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that no amount of marijuana has been proven safe to use during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.



- THC, the main active chemical found in marijuana, can be passed to your baby through breastmilk. When used, THC is stored in the body's fat up to 30 days and will slowly release over time, meaning your baby could be exposed at any given time.
- Using any product with THC and/or CBD may impair your ability to care for your baby.
- Marijuana levels have found to be 8 times higher in breastmilk. This means your baby could get 8 times higher amounts of marijuana if they drink your breastmilk if you used any amount of marijuana before breastfeeding.

**Risks to your Baby:** Not waking to eat, poor feeding, weight gain issues, delays in brain, behavior and movement, may have ADHD when they get older.

### Methamphetamines

- There are case reports of infant death following exposure to methamphetamine through breastmilk.
- **Risks to your Baby:** Potential neurobehavioral or psychomotor delays, growth restriction, and increased risk of death.

### Cocaine

- **Risks to your Baby:** Seizures, choking, gasping, increased heart rate, increased breathing rate, increased blood pressure, vomiting and diarrhea and increased risk of death

### Heroin

- **Risks to your Baby:** Over-sleepiness and hard to wake up, slowed breathing rate, poor feeding, increased risk of death

## Breastfeeding is a Journey and We are Here to Support You

At Avera, we want you to have a positive and supportive breastfeeding journey. Please contact a lactation professional with any questions you may have about your specific situation and/or your plan on ceasing the breastfeeding journey prior to your goal.

In the event that you may have a question of the safety of your milk outside of office hours, please pump and save your milk by writing the date on the container until you have received further guidance from an Avera lactation professional.

**Contact a lactation professional or learn more about breastfeeding at [Avera.org/lactation](https://Avera.org/lactation)**



### REFERENCES

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prescription Medication Use. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding>.
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- 6 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco and E-Cigarettes. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding>.
- 7 U.S. Food and Drug Administration. What You Should Know About Using Cannabis, Including CBD, When Pregnant or Breastfeeding. 2019. <https://www.fda.gov/consumers>

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