

# MEDICATION SAFETY IN BREASTFED INFANT



Providing breast milk carries a potential for medication side effects or adverse effects to the infant or child ingesting it if the medication is present in the breast milk.

When using medication while providing breast milk, a health provider needs to be aware the client is providing breast milk to be able to weigh the risks and benefits to both the mother and infant or child.

- Most medications administered to lactating people are detectable in breast milk.
- The concentration of medications reached in breast milk is usually low and often lower than a neonatal dose in appropriate medications.
- When medications are excreted in breast milk, effects can occur in the infant or child receiving the milk. It is important to consult with a health care provider regarding the most recent evidence on medication safety during lactation.

## Ways to decrease risk to the infant:

- Take medications immediately after breastfeeding.
- Take any medication, including over-the-counter medications, only as needed and under the guidance of a health care provider.
- Avoid known hazardous drugs, such as cocaine or heroin.
- Limit use of alcohol, cigarettes, and cannabis products.
- Avoid medications with long half-lives or medications labeled as extended release.

## NURSING NOTES:

**LactMed@NIH** is a free and searchable database of drugs and other chemicals to which nursing mothers may be exposed.

Pharmacology and medicine is ever-evolving. It is essential to keep risk vs benefit in mind when considering medication use while breastfeeding, as there is a shortage of reliable data regarding toxicity from drug use during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

## NOTES

