

# Breastfeeding - Mother's Illness

## Definition

- Breastfeeding questions about mother's illness

## Health Information

### Keep Breastfeeding for Most Illnesses

- For most illnesses, keep breastfeeding. Reason: breast milk gives antibodies to your baby to help fight off germs.
- If you are too sick, you can pump to keep your milk supply up. Have someone else feed your baby the expressed milk.

## Care Advice

- 1. Keep Breastfeeding for Most Illnesses:**
  - Examples are when you have a cold, cough or diarrhea.
  - Keep nursing, even if you have a fever.
  - Reason: Breast milk carries your antibodies. These can protect your baby from the full-blown illness.
- 2. Use Good Hand Washing:**
  - Try to prevent the spread of infection by good hand washing.
  - Do this after blowing your nose (for colds) or after stools (for diarrhea).
  - Wash your hands before you pick up your baby.
- 3. Medicines That Are Safe to Use While Breastfeeding:**
  - It's best to take your medicine(s) at the end of a feeding.
  - **Pain or Fever:** Ibuprofen or acetaminophen are safe to use in breastfeeding moms. Aspirin (325 mg) should not be used.
  - **Decongestants:** Do not use decongestants by mouth. They can reduce milk supply in some mothers. An example is Sudafed.
  - **Nose Sprays:** Nose sprays can be used. A decongestant spray (such as Afrin) is a safe choice while breastfeeding. Do not use for more than 3 days. A steroid nasal spray can also be used for a longer time. Saline nasal sprays are safe to use as needed for stuffy noses.
  - **Allergy Meds:** These drugs for allergy symptoms are OK during breastfeeding. Non-sedating allergy medicines (long-acting ones) are preferred. They can be given as needed once per day at bedtime. Do not use combination products with decongestants.
  - **Cough Meds:** Dextromethorphan (DM) is okay to use while nursing. Breastfed babies should be watched for sleepiness or poor feeding. Cough drops and honey are safe to use by moms for a cough. (Caution: Do not give honey to infants less than 1 year old).
  - Talk with your doctor or nurse about other medicines before using.

#### 4. **Stop Breastfeeding for these Medical Concerns:**

- There are few medical conditions in the mother when breastfeeding is not advised.
- Some of these are:
  - AIDS
  - Herpes simplex rash (fever blisters) on the nipple/areola
  - Drug abuse
  - TB
  - Talk with your doctor.

### **Call Your Doctor If**

- You become worse
- You think you need to be seen
- Your baby becomes sick
- You have other questions or concerns

#### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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