

# Quick Breastfeeding Reference for Moms with Substance Use

Drug / Medication	Breastfeeding Effects	Effects on Infant	Consider
Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk at same levels as in mom's bloodstream</li> <li>• Decreases milk supply (Beer does not stimulate milk production)</li> <li>• Changes the taste of breast milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be too sleepy</li> <li>• When used in excess, can cause your baby to have brain damage</li> <li>• Can cause you to be too sleepy to care for your infant safely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not breastfeed (pump and dump) for 2 hours after drinking 2 drinks (2 beers, 8 oz glass of wine, or 2 oz of liquor)</li> <li>• If you drink more than 2 drinks avoid breastfeeding</li> <li>• Pump and dump for 12 hours after binge drinking</li> </ul>
Amphetamines (Stimulants for ADHD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk in small amounts at prescribed doses</li> <li>• At high doses, high levels pass into breast milk</li> <li>• May decrease milk production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be agitated, hyperactive, have difficulty sleeping, have a poor appetite, poor weight gain, or tremors</li> <li>• Long term effects are not known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding is ok at prescribed doses</li> <li>• If you take this without a prescription, pump and dump for 24 hours before breastfeeding</li> <li>• Consider asking your doctor to switch you to methylphenidate or bupropion</li> </ul>
Benzodiazepine Sedatives ex: lorazepam (Ativan), alprazolam (Xanax), diazepam (valium), clonazepam (Klonopin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk in varying amounts depending on the half-life of the individual medicine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be too sleepy, not eat well, not gain weight</li> <li>• Can cause you to be too sleepy to care for your infant safely</li> <li>• If combined with opioids and/or alcohol, can cause your baby to stop breathing</li> <li>• Can cause withdrawal after stopping (irritability, crying, poor sleep, poor feeding)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you take these occasionally, pump and dump for 8 hours before breastfeeding</li> <li>• If you take these daily, consult your doctor to consider tapering off / stopping use before breastfeeding</li> </ul>
Buprenorphine (Suboxone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels in breast milk are low</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At high doses, can cause your baby to be too sleepy, pale, constipated, not sleep, not eat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding is recommended while receiving buprenorphine for opiate dependency</li> <li>• Do not stop breastfeeding abruptly. Consult your doctor; taper off slowly to avoid withdrawal</li> </ul>



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Cocaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes easily into breast milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babies are very sensitive to cocaine and cannot break it down, causing your baby to have seizures, high blood pressure, turn blue, choke, vomit, have diarrhea, tremors, high heart rate and irritability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do not breastfeed for at least 90-days after taking</b> (pump and dump)</li> </ul>
Gabapentin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doses prescribed by a doctor usually don't produce high levels in babies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on baby can include drowsiness, poor weight gain, and developmental milestones, especially when used with seizure or psychiatric medications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OK to breastfeed at prescribed doses</li> <li>• Recommend caution, consult your doctor and consider stopping use if you are using more than prescribed (or &gt; 2100 mg/day)</li> </ul>
Heroin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be too sleepy, not breathe, have low blood pressure, poor feeding, vomiting, tremors, restlessness</li> <li>• Can cause you to be too sleepy to care for your infant safely</li> <li>• Can cause withdrawal symptoms if you stop breastfeeding abruptly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not breastfeed, pump and dump for at least 24 hours after using</li> <li>• Do not breastfeed if you use heroin daily</li> <li>• Consider enrolling in a treatment program with methadone or buprenorphine so you can breastfeed safely</li> </ul>
Ketamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited / no data available regarding breastfeeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little data on effects on baby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend caution</li> <li>• Consult with your doctor and consider stopping/changing medications if able</li> </ul>
Kratom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited / no data in pregnancy or breastfeeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on your baby are similar to the effects of heroin or morphine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not breastfeed, pump and dump for 4 hours after using, if you use rarely</li> <li>• Pump and dump for 24 hours after using if you</li> </ul>

Questions about breastfeeding with medications you are taking? Consult with your doctor.  
 Unable to stop taking any of the medications or drugs listed below? Speak with your doctor about treatment.



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Marijuana/ Cannabis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THC is concentrated in breast milk, the brain and body fat for weeks to months after use</li> <li>• Can decrease milk supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be too sleepy, not wake up to eat or eat poorly</li> <li>• May increase the risk of SIDS</li> <li>• May cause developmental delays and behavior problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use is strongly discouraged while breastfeeding.</li> <li>• Consider stopping use so you can breastfeed safely</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you are unable to stop using</li> </ul>
Methadone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk in small amounts</li> <li>• Breastfeeding may decrease withdrawal symptoms in infants who were exposed in utero</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent use can cause your baby to be too sleepy, stop breathing, become pale, constipated, not wake up to eat or eat poorly</li> <li>• Can cause withdrawal symptoms if you stop breastfeeding abruptly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding is recommended while receiving methadone for opiate dependency</li> <li>• If you use inconsistently, pump and dump for at least 12 hours after using</li> <li>• Do not stop breastfeeding abruptly. Consult your doctor. Taper off slowly to avoid withdrawal</li> </ul>
Methamphetamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes easily into breastmilk in small amounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be agitated, irritable, have poor sleep, poor weight gain, and tremors</li> <li>• There are case reports of infant death due to exposure in breast milk</li> <li>• Long-term behavioral effects are reported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Breastfeeding is strongly discouraged</b></li> <li>• Consider stopping use so you can breastfeed safely</li> <li>• Pump and dump for 48 hours after using</li> </ul>

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<p>Opioids oxycodone, hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk in small amounts</li> <li>• Breastfeeding may decrease withdrawal symptoms in infants who were exposed in utero</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent use can cause your baby to be too sleepy, stop breathing, become pale, constipated, not wake up to eat or eat poorly</li> <li>• Can cause withdrawal symptoms if you stop breastfeeding abruptly</li> <li>• Can cause you to be too sleepy to care for your infant safely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding is encouraged if you are under medical supervision with consistent use (i.e. chronic pain management or addiction treatment programs)</li> <li>• If you use inconsistently, do not breastfeed, pump and dump for 4 hours after using</li> <li>• Breastfeed at least 2 hours after, or immediately before use</li> <li>• Do not stop breastfeeding abruptly. Taper off to avoid withdrawal</li> <li>• Consider enrolling in a treatment program to help you stop using or transition to medically supervised opioid therapy</li> </ul>
<p>SSRIs for depression or anxiety Fluoxetine (Prozac), Sertraline (Zoloft), Citalopram (Celexa), Escitalopram (Lexapro)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes into breast milk in small amounts</li> <li>• Breastfeeding may decrease withdrawal symptoms in infants who were exposed in utero</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause withdrawal symptoms if you stop breastfeeding abruptly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeed as desired</li> <li>• Do not discontinue without consulting your doctor</li> </ul>
<p>Synthetic Cannabinoids (Spice, K2, others), CBD oil, THC products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little specific information on synthetic cannabinoids</li> <li>• THC is concentrated in breast milk, the brain and body fat for weeks to months after use</li> <li>• Can decrease milk supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can cause your baby to be too sleepy, not wake up to eat or eat poorly</li> <li>• May increase the risk of SIDS</li> <li>• May cause developmental delays and behavior problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use is not recommended</li> <li>• Consult your doctor and consider stopping use so you can breastfeed safely</li> </ul>

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Unable to stop taking any of the medications or drugs listed below? Speak with your doctor about treatment.

References:

1. Drugs and Lactation Database (LactMed). Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US); 2006-. Accessed Feb-April 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/n/lactmed>
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3. Hale, T. W., & Rowe, H. E. (2014). Medications & mothers milk: 2014. Plano, TX: Hale Publishing, L.P.