

MOTHERTOBABY GA

MONTHLY  
NEWSLETTER

## DRINKING WHILE NURSING: IS IT SAFE?

Many moms learn that drinking alcohol during pregnancy can hurt their developing baby. Before the baby is born, alcohol can get to the fetus through the placenta and can cause birth defects, miscarriage and other harmful outcomes. But what about drinking alcohol while nursing?

Alcohol does get into breast milk at about the same level as is in your blood stream. Even though there is not enough evidence to say that the amount of alcohol in breast milk could hurt a baby, it's still recommended not to nurse while alcohol is in your system.

Why? Alcohol is found to...

**1) Lower the amount of milk you make** (by about

20%).<sup>1</sup> Alcohol stops the body from making oxytocin, a hormone that triggers let-down.

**2) Change the way your breast milk tastes and smells.**

**3) Make baby's sleep cycles shorter** (shortening of sleep intervals).<sup>2</sup>

Having a lot of alcohol in your breast milk can make baby sleepy and have problems with movement (just like you when you drink too much). It can also make baby sleep less! The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that moms who are breastfeeding avoid drinking alcohol while they are nursing.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

**Call:** 866-626-6847

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If you have had an alcoholic beverage and are unsure about when it is safe to feed your baby...

**DO** wait at least 2-2.5 hours per alcoholic drink before breastfeeding.\* (For each drink, it is recommended to wait an additional 2-2.5 hours).

**DO NOT** drink excess water, "pump and dump" breast milk, exercise or take caffeine in an effort to get rid of alcohol in your body as these will not work.

*\*For heavy drinkers (2+ drinks daily), a longer wait is recommended.*

1. Hale T, Rowe H. *Medications And Mothers' Milk* 2017. New York: Springer Publishing Company; 2017.

2. Mennella J, Gerrish C. Effects of Exposure to Alcohol in Mother's Milk on Infant Sleep. *PEDIATRICS*. 1998;101(5):e2-e2. doi:10.1542/peds.101.5.e2.



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