Ep. 93 – The Fourth Trimester: Medications, Beauty Products & Breastfeeding After Birth

The weeks after delivery (often called the fourth trimester) can raise just as many questions as pregnancy itself. From pain management and supplements to beauty treatments and mental health medications, many parents are unsure how different exposures may affect breastfeeding.

In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, MS, CGC, is joined by Kirstie Perrotta, MPH, and Angela Messer, MS, Teratogen Information Specialists from MotherToBaby California, to discuss some of the most common postpartum questions they receive from parents and healthcare providers.

Together, they explain how exposure information is evaluated during breastfeeding and how factors like dose, timing, and route of exposure influence what may reach breast milk.

In This Episode, You'll Learn:

- What the fourth trimester is and why exposure questions continue after delivery
- Common postpartum concerns, including pain medications, stool softeners, and laxatives
- How prescription pain medications, including opioids, are evaluated during breastfeeding
- Why route of exposure matters when considering topical products
- What to know about hair dye, Botox, manicures, facials, and salon treatments
- Why supplements, herbal products, and proprietary blends raise additional questions
- Which over-the-counter medications are often discussed in the breastfeeding period
- How medication guidance can differ between pregnancy and lactation
- Why addressing postpartum mental health conditions is essential
- Common breastfeeding myths and misconceptions

- Practical tips to reduce direct infant contact with topical products

Key Takeaways:

- Many medications have data available for use during breastfeeding
- Topical products are typically evaluated based on how they are applied and absorbed
- High-dose supplements and proprietary blends often lack breastfeeding data
- Postpartum pain, mental health, and chronic conditions deserve appropriate treatment
- Feeding decisions are personal, and there is no single approach that works for everyone

Resources Mentioned:

- MotherToBaby.org – evidence-based fact sheets, Baby Blogs, podcasts, and educational resources
- Over 300 fact sheets in English and Spanish on medications, exposures, and health conditions
- One-on-one support via phone, chat, text, or email
- MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies – helping expand knowledge about medications, conditions, and exposures in pregnancy and lactation

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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In this episode of the ***MotherToBaby Podcast***, host and genetic counselor Chris Stallman welcomes Dr. Emily Caffrey, a certified health physicist at the Health Physics Society and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Together, they dive into one of the most frequently asked topics: how radiation exposure may impact breastfeeding.

Dr. Caffrey explains the difference between ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, details how imaging procedures like X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs interact with the body, and addresses concerns around contrast agents and radioactive tracers. The episode also covers what breastfeeding women working around radiation should know, including practical safety tips and case-by-case considerations.

Key Takeaways:

- Diagnostic imaging procedures do not make breast milk radioactive or require stopping breastfeeding
- Some radioactive tracers or therapeutic treatments may require temporary or permanent changes to breastfeeding plans, depending on the specific agent and dose
- Always inform your healthcare provider that you're breastfeeding and ask questions about any upcoming procedures
- Expert help is available—don't rely on internet searches alone

Resources mentioned in this episode:

- MotherToBaby.org
- Health Physics Society
- American College of Radiology Guidelines
- Call 866-626-6847 or text 855-999-3525 to speak with a MotherToBaby specialist

 Subscribe to the podcast and never miss an episode!

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Lisa Bain and Chardá Bell of the Global Communities' Healthy Start program join host Chris Stallman to talk about breastfeeding, the racial and economic disparities affecting many communities across the nation and what they're

doing about it in San Diego, CA.

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Ep. 93 – The Fourth Trimester: Medications, Beauty Products & Breastfeeding After Birth

Becky Spencer, PhD, APRN, PMHNP-BC, IBCLC, PMH-C, FILCA joins host Chris Stallman, CGC, to talk about updated information about having HIV and breastfeeding. Dr. Spencer discusses the stigma and provides the latest evidence-based guidelines for HIV-positive parents.

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Ep. 93 – The Fourth Trimester: Medications, Beauty Products & Breastfeeding After Birth

Dr. Phil Anderson, medications in breastfeeding expert, joins host Chris Stallman, CGC, to discuss LactRx, a free new app providing current information on the use of medications, vaccines, diagnostic agents & drugs of misuse during breastfeeding. The LactRx app provides easy access to the LactMed database, a resource from the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

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