

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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Kimberly Harper, MSN, RN, MHA of The 4th Trimester Project and the University of North Carolina Collaborative for Maternal and Infant Health joins host Chris Stallman, CGC to discuss preparing for the critical weeks after getting home from the hospital with a newborn, also known as “the 4th trimester.”

Resources mentioned during the podcast include:

New Mom Toolkit: <https://newmomhealth.com/>

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Dr. Jessica Vernon, a New York-based OBGYN recently featured on the Today Show, continues telling her story of postpartum depression and anxiety (also known as perinatal mood disorders). In this second part of the conversation, she talks about certain medications prescribed during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

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Dr. Jessica Vernon, a New York-based OBGYN recently featured on the Today Show, shares her story of postpartum depression and anxiety (also known as perinatal mood disorders). Even as an OBGYN, the often-debilitating condition was difficult to recognize during her own motherhood journey. Dr. Vernon joins host Chris Stallman, certified genetic counselor, to share the lesser-known symptoms of postpartum depression and anxiety and when it's time to get help.

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