

Understanding how alcohol affects your milk

Did you know...

- **Alcohol can lower the milk supply** and lower the flow of milk during a feed. This can cause the baby to grow and develop more slowly.
- **Alcohol can enter milk quickly** - it reaches its highest level within 30 to 60 minutes of drinking.
- Feeding the baby after drinking alcohol can make them drowsy or weak. It can also cause problems with growth, movement, sleep, or their ability to learn.
- **Infants under 3 months are more impacted** because their livers are still developing and are unable to break down alcohol.
- Avoiding alcohol in breast or chest milk is safest for the baby, especially until the baby is 8 weeks old.
- However, occasional drinking **should not** stop you from breast or chest feeding if you would like to do so, since human milk provides complete nutrients for the baby.

If you drink occasionally, here are some tips for lowering the risk to the baby:

- If possible, avoid drinking until the baby is at least 8 weeks old. Younger infants are not able to break down alcohol.
- When nursing, try to **feed the baby right before you start to drink alcohol**. Or, **pump and store** your milk before you begin drinking. If you have been drinking before it's time to feed, use stored milk or formula if you can.
- Try to wait for the alcohol to leave your milk (about 2 hours per drink) before feeding the baby. Use the Alcohol and Milk Calculator (see QR code below) for exact timing.
- "Pumping and dumping" will not speed up the clearing of alcohol from your milk.
- Eating food while you drink helps to lower how much alcohol gets into your milk.

You can support the baby's growth and health by avoiding alcohol or cutting down as much as possible while the baby is dependent on your milk.



Learn more:



Alcohol and
Milk
Calculator



Short guide to
breastfeeding



Fact sheet about
alcohol and
breastmilk



Overview on
alcohol and
breastfeeding

