



Breastfeeding After Surgery

This information sheet is being provided to you because you are currently breast/chest feeding and scheduled for a day surgery operation at the Grey Nuns Hospital (GNH).

Generally, it is perfectly safe to continue to breast/chest feed your baby almost immediately following surgery. Important factors in resuming direct feeding or pumping after surgery are your level of alertness and pain control. The information below will help answer common concerns around resuming your breastfeeding relationship with your baby.

When can I resume feeding my baby after surgery?

Most often, it is safe for you to feed your baby as soon as you are awake and alert enough to safely hold your baby. You may feel more sleepy than usual following your surgery, so ensure that you have some help to care for the baby. If you have questions, please discuss this with your anesthesiologist and surgery team on the day of your procedure.

What pain medications can I safely take after surgery while breastfeeding?

- Treating your pain is important. Your recovery will be better and you will have a much easier time feeding your baby if your pain is controlled.
- Acetaminophen/ Tylenol and anti-inflammatory medications such as Diclofenac/ Voltaren are excellent options for most healthy breastfeeding patients with healthy infants.
- Tramadol/Tramacet is generally safe for breastfeeding patients with healthy children born at term. When taking this medication, always take the lowest dose that keeps you comfortable. We recommended taking it for a maximum of four days while breastfeeding.
- When taking prescriptions such as Tramacet that contain Tramadol you should monitor your baby for any signs of increased sleepiness (more than usual), difficulty feeding, and/ or difficulty breathing. If any of these things occur, stop feeding your baby while you are taking the medication and seek medical attention immediately.
- If you feel more drowsy than usual after taking Tramacet, your baby may also become drowsy from your breast milk and you should avoid feeding your baby until your drowsiness has improved.
- Please let your healthcare team know if your baby was born premature or has medical conditions so that they can best advise you on which prescriptions to take while breastfeeding. Depending on what medical illness(es) your breastfed child has, you may be advised to avoid breastfeeding after surgery until you no longer need pain



medication. If you want to resume breastfeeding after you are no longer taking these prescriptions you should still pump/ express milk as per your usual schedule until you can resume direct feeding again. Feel free to discuss what you should do with this pumped milk with your child's primary care provider.

Thank you for taking the time to read this resource. If you are interested in resources related to anesthesia and breastfeeding please visit the below link or speak with your healthcare team. An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) can be an excellent resource during this time, if you have further concerns around pumping or breast/chest feeding.

Le Leche League Canada: Surgery, Anesthesia and Medications while Breastfeeding

<https://www.lllc.ca/surgery-anesthesia-and-medications-while-breastfeeding>