

# Breastfeeding and Over-the-Counter Medicine


Most nursing mothers do not need to stop breastfeeding to take over-the-counter or prescribed medicines. Almost all medicines pass into breastmilk, but usually only in very small amounts. Always follow the directions on the container about how to take the medicine. Check with a health care provider, either yours or your baby's, or a Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) to find out if you can take a certain medicine while breastfeeding. The ADHS 24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline is available at 1-800-833-4642 to answer your questions about breastfeeding and medicines.

## Tips for Lowering Your Risk of Breastfeeding While Taking Medicine

- Only take medicine if you really need it.
- Take the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time.
- Avoid extra-strength formulas.
- Watch for signs of a possible drug reaction in your baby, such as sleepiness, rash, diarrhea, or increased fussiness. Call your baby's health care provider if you see any of these changes.
- Always follow the directions when taking a medicine or follow the instructions from your health care provider.

Below is a list of over-the-counter medicines that are safe to take while breastfeeding. This list does not include all medicines that are safe during breastfeeding. Always check with a health care provider, either yours or your baby's, to see if the medicine is safe for you and your baby.


### Cold, Flu, and Allergy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alavert</li> <li>• Allegra</li> <li>• Benadryl</li> <li>• Claritin</li> <li>• Robitussin</li> <li>• Mucinex</li> <li>• Vicks 44</li> <li>• Benadryl</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tylenol Cold</li> <li>• Advil Cold &amp; Sinus</li> <li>• Dextromethorphan</li> <li>• TheraFlu</li> <li>• Zyrtec</li> <li>• Acetaminophen</li> <li>• Guaifenesin</li> </ul>	<p><i>Decongestants such as pseudoephedrine are safe to take, but may lower your milk production. Speak to the pharmacist about decongestants.</i></p> <p><i>Be sure to drink extra fluids and rest. Call your health care provider if your symptoms do not get better.</i></p>
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### Nasal Sprays

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ocean</li> <li>• Nasalcrom</li> <li>• Afrin</li> <li>• Neo-Syneprine</li> </ul>	
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### Gastrointestinal (GI)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefiber</li> <li>• Ex-Lax</li> <li>• Gas-X</li> <li>• Imodium</li> <li>• Maalox</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metamucil</li> <li>• Milk of Magnesia</li> <li>• Miralax</li> <li>• Pepto-Bismol</li> <li>• Tums</li> </ul>	<p><i>GI, or stomach, upsets can cause dehydration. Be sure to drink extra fluids and continue to breastfeed. If your symptoms do not get better after 24 hours, call your health care provider.</i></p>
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### Pain Relievers / Fever Reducers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aleve</li> <li>• Ibuprofen</li> <li>• Advil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motrin IB</li> <li>• Acetaminophen</li> <li>• Tylenol</li> </ul>	<p><i>Avoid using aspirin while breastfeeding due to the risk to a breastfeeding infant. Be sure to drink extra fluids and rest. Call your health care provider if your symptoms do not get better in 24 hours or if your temperature is greater than 100.4°.</i></p>
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## Galactagogues



Galactagogues are medicines, herbs, and foods that are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration but may increase your breastmilk supply. Not all galactagogues are safe to take by all mothers and only work when breastmilk is being removed frequently and effectively from the breast, either by a pump or a nursing infant. If you feel you have a low milk supply, contact an IBCLC to help find what is causing the issue before taking a galactagogue. The ADHS 24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline is available at 1-800-833-4642 to answer your questions about low milk supply and galactagogues.

### Some Examples of Galactagogues:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fenugreek</li> <li>• Goat's Rue</li> <li>• Milk Thistle</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malunggay</li> <li>• Blessed Thistle</li> </ul> |
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## Nicotine Quit Aids



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit</li> <li>• Habitrol</li> <li>• NicoDerm</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicorette</li> <li>• Nicotrol</li> </ul> |
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*The Arizona Smokers' Helpline (ASHLine) is a free and online resource to help you quit smoking and using tobacco. Contact them 24 hours a day: 1-800-55-66-222 or visit <https://ashline.org>*

## Alcohol

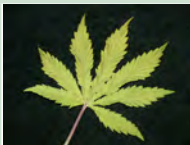


Alcohol passes into breastmilk in small amounts. Even though light drinking has not been found to be harmful to a breastfeeding baby, your baby may not tolerate the effects of alcohol, depending on your infant's age. It is best to wait for your body to process the alcohol before breastfeeding your infant again. "Pumping and dumping," or throwing out pumped breastmilk after drinking alcohol, does not lower the amount of alcohol in your milk, but pumping may keep you from becoming engorged.

**Daily drinking and binge drinking, or having 4 drinks in 2 hours, are not safe while breastfeeding.**

The drugs below are NOT safe to take while breastfeeding. Speak to your health care provider for more information or call the ADHS **24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline at 1-800-833-4642.**

## Street Drugs / Recreational Drugs



Recreational drugs, also known as street drugs, are NEVER safe while breastfeeding. These include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannabis/Marijuana</li> <li>• Heroin</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cocaine</li> <li>• Methamphetamines</li> </ul> |
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**24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline**  
1-800-833-4642