

Preparing for your Hospitalization or Procedure while Breastfeeding

This information will help you maintain your breast milk supply as you prepare for hospitalization or any medical procedure including surgery.

Before Your Hospitalization/Procedure

Talk with your provider and anesthesiologist about the type of medication that you will receive before, during, and after any surgery or procedure as well as any other medications planned during your hospital stay. By talking with your healthcare team ahead of time, they can support you throughout your hospitalization.

If you have questions about any of the medications you will receive, there are resources that can help:

- Infant Risk Center: 806-352-2519; www.infantrisk.com/category/breastfeeding
- MotherToBaby: 866-626-6847; text – 855-999-3525; Live chat on website www.mothersbaby.org
- Drugs and Lactation Database LactNet: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK501922/
- Oklahoma Lactation Resource Guide – to locate a lactation consultant near you <https://okbreastfeeding.org/breastfeeding-help/lactation-consultant-resource-guide/>
- Oklahoma Breastfeeding Hotline – 877-271-MILK(6455) or text OK2BF to 61222 English and Spanish, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If possible, pump and store a supply of breast milk before your hospitalization or procedure. Storing milk ahead of time will allow your baby to continue to be fed your milk if you need to be separated. You can find information about how to safely store your milk by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website listed under “Additional Resources” below.

What to Bring to the Hospital

- Your own breast pump including the power source
- All the supplies that you will need to express milk
- Breast milk storage containers
- A cooler bag with ice packs (to store expressed breast milk)

The Day of Your Procedure or Surgery

Plan to breastfeed or express your milk right before your procedure. This will help maintain your milk supply and prevent pain and engorgement. Tell all members of your healthcare team that you are breastfeeding and wish to continue.

After Your Procedure or Surgery

Anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) does not stay in your body for very long. If you have questions about the anesthesia you received, talk with your anesthesiologist. You should plan to start pumping again as soon as you are awake and able. If you need help, ask a member of your healthcare team. You may also need help from your family or friends while you recover from your procedure.

While you are separated from your baby, plan to pump every 3-4 hours, or at least as often as your baby nurses. Pumping frequently will help to maintain your milk supply until you are able to breastfeed again. If you are exclusively pumping attempt to maintain your regular schedule as closely as possible.

If you have questions about any of the medications that you will receive after your procedure and during your hospital stay, talk with your healthcare provider about finding a medication that will least impact your

breastfeeding and/or milk supply. You can also check the websites or call the number listed in the “Before Your Hospitalization/Procedure” section above.

If you expect to stay in the hospital for more than 24 hours, make arrangements with a family member or friend to bring your pumped milk to your baby each day. If no one is available to pick up your milk, talk with your nurse about labeling and storage arrangements in the hospital. Expressed milk can be safely stored in an insulated cooler bag with ice packs for 24 hours. Keep the ice packs in contact with the milk containers at all times and open the cooler bag as little as possible. Expressed milk may also be stored in a refrigerator (40°F) for 4 days. As per the [CDC](#) and [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) breast milk is not considered a biohazard.

Additional Resources:

CDC Proper Handling and Storage of Human Milk

https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm