

Stimulants and Lactation



It may be safe to nurse your baby if you're taking Ritalin and Adderall that comes from a pharmacy.

If you're taking other types of stimulants, doses that make you high, or pills that aren't from a pharmacy, it isn't safe to chest/breastfeed.

What are stimulants?

Stimulants or “uppers” are drugs that speed up heart rate, breathing, and increase blood pressure. Cocaine, methamphetamine, Adderall® (amphetamine and dextroamphetamine), and Ritalin® (methylphenidate) are all stimulants.

Can stimulants enter human milk?

Yes. If you take stimulants, your milk will have stimulants in it. The amount that is in your milk depends on how much you take, which stimulant you take and the amount of time that has passed since taking it.

- Cocaine remains in human milk for about 36 hours after taking it. If you take cocaine while drinking alcohol, your body makes a substance called cocaethylene, which will stay in your body longer than cocaine does.
- Methamphetamine remains in human milk for up to 4 days after use.
- Prescribed Ritalin® (methylphenidate) remains in human milk for about 21 hours after use.
- Prescribed Adderall® (dextroamphetamine and amphetamine) remains in human milk for over 24 hours.

About prescribed Ritalin and Adderall

- You may not need to pump and discard milk if you take stimulants as prescribed. Talk to your healthcare provider about which stimulant you're taking and the amount you're taking when deciding if chest/breastfeeding is right for you and your baby.
- There are no known negative effects on nursing babies when their parent takes less than 45 mg/day Adderall® (amphetamine) or 80 mg/day Ritalin® (methylphenidate).

If you occasionally take stimulants that aren't prescribed or you use them again after stopping

Before taking stimulants:

- Plan for feeding your baby. Pump and store your milk, buy infant formula, or buy donor milk.

While taking stimulants:

- Don't smoke methamphetamine, cocaine, or other stimulants near your baby, where your baby lives, or in closed spaces like cars.

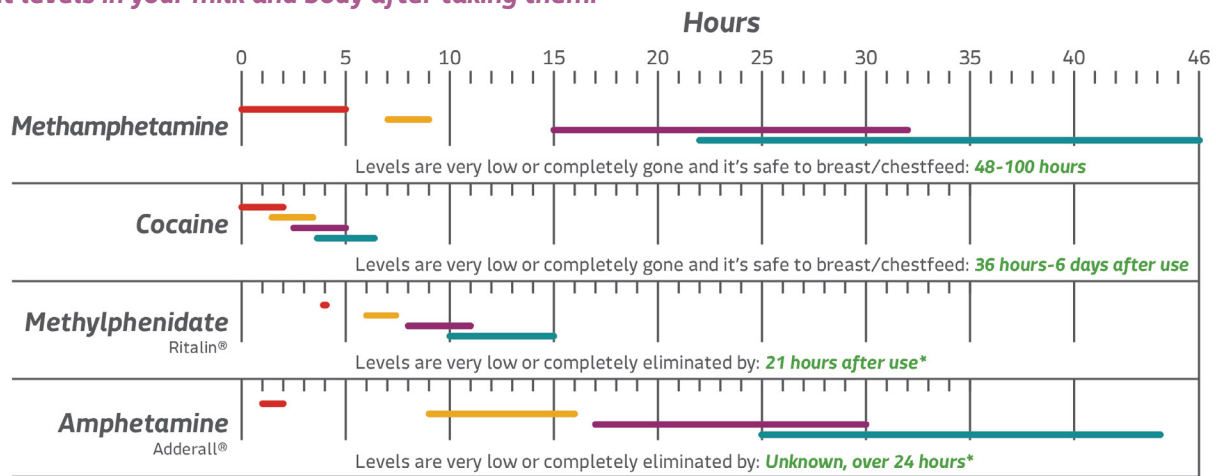
After taking stimulants:

- You can feed your baby infant formula, donor milk, or milk you pumped before taking stimulants.
- You can pump for comfort and then discard your milk until your milk is free of stimulants.
- Pumping as often as you usually feed your baby is a good way to maintain your milk supply.

How long should you pump and discard your milk before chest/breastfeeding again?

- Methamphetamine:** Pump and discard milk for at least 48 hours after using. Small amounts of methamphetamine can remain in milk for up to 100 hours (~4 days). If you have a urine drug test and it is negative for methamphetamine, it's ok to resume nursing.
- Cocaine:** Pump and discard milk for at least 36 hours after using cocaine. Small amounts of cocaine can remain in milk for up to 6 days.
- You may need to pump and discard your milk after taking amphetamine or methylphenidate. We don't know exactly how long.

Stimulant levels in your milk and body after taking them:



Key

- Red bar: Stimulant level highest after use
- Yellow bar: Stimulant levels 1/2 of highest level after use
- Purple bar: Stimulant levels 1/4 of their highest level after use
- Teal bar: Stimulant levels at 1/8 of their highest level after use

* Prescribed use



Keeping you and your baby healthy and safe

- Taking a multivitamin with iodine and eating brightly colored fruits and vegetables can increase the nutrition in your milk.
- Talk to your baby's healthcare provider if your baby isn't sleeping well, has difficulty eating, is irritable, shaky, has a fever or isn't gaining weight.
- Get a babysitter for the time you are intoxicated.
- Don't drive while you're under the influence of stimulants.
- Avoid sleeping with your baby. The safest sleep arrangement is to share the same room with your baby in their own crib.
- Protect yourself and your baby from secondhand smoke. Ask other people not to smoke stimulants in your home and don't take your baby to places where there is smoke.
- You can reduce the negative effects on your baby by taking lower amounts of stimulants, taking stimulants less often, and waiting until your milk doesn't have stimulants in it to nurse your baby.
- Store stimulants and other substances securely. This is especially important if toddlers or other children are in the house.
 - **If you think your baby has swallowed opioids**, call Poison Control at 800-222-1222.
 - **Call 911** if your baby has slow breathing, stops breathing, is difficult to wake, has skin or lips that look blue, is lethargic, too sleepy, or has vomiting and/or diarrhea that won't stop.

How stimulants may affect an infant

Stimulants can make babies fussy, have poor sleep, slow weight gain, not want to eat, vomit, and have diarrhea. Their body can become too hot and have jitters, seizures, and heart problems.

There are no known negative effects on babies when parents take methylphenidate or amphetamine as prescribed.

If I take stimulants while I'm pregnant, will my baby have withdrawal symptoms after they're born?

If you take stimulants while you're pregnant, your baby might have withdrawal symptoms after they're born. Your baby will also need to stay in the hospital for a few extra days.

When you give birth, the best type of care for you and your baby is called Eat, Sleep and Console. This care includes:

- You and your baby staying in the same room together.
- Keeping the room quiet with the light dim.
- Swaddling and holding your baby.
- Nursing your baby or holding them skin-to-skin while they bottle feed.



Not all hospitals offer Eat, Sleep and Console. To find out if the hospital you're planning to deliver at offers Eat, Sleep and Console you can:

- Ask your prenatal care provider if the hospital you want to deliver at offers Eat, Sleep and Console.
- You can call the hospital's main phone number and ask the operator for the maternity department (this is sometimes called the 'postpartum', 'antepartum' or 'mother baby' floors/units). Any of the nurses working should know if they offer Eat, Sleep and Console.
- If you can, choose to deliver at a hospital that offers Eat, Sleep and Console. That is the best type of care for you and your baby.

Stimulants and lactation

Stimulants disrupt hormones that are important for lactation and milk letdown. Because of this you may make less milk if you take stimulants.

Reducing your stimulant use

It can be difficult to stop using stimulants if you've taken them for a long time. Talk to your health care provider or call the [Washington Recovery Help Line](#) at 866-789-1511 for support or information about how to quit or reduce your use.

People use different terms to describe their body parts. Some transgender and non-binary birth parents use "chest" instead of "breasts." In this document, we use breastfeeding and chestfeeding as interchangeable terms. Lactation is a biological process where your body makes milk to feed babies.