

## Breastfeeding in a procedural setting

You can continue breastfeeding your child even if you need anesthesia.

### Advance planning

Discuss the following items with your treatment team:

- Tell them that you want to breastfeed your child before and after the operation.
- Find out the usual length of the planned operation and the stay in the recovery room.
- Discuss the usual recovery time, post-operative pain control, and potential movement restrictions.

Ask your family and friends for help with your child both in the hospital and at home.

You will probably feel more comfortable drawing enough milk for several feedings. That milk may not be necessary, but you will be reassured knowing that it's available for your child if necessary. The breast-pumping or hand-expression session can be done 1 or 2 times a day for several days, for collecting the desired amount. It can then be refrigerated for 8 days or frozen for 6 months.

### The day of the operation

With the help of the treatment team, just before you leave for the operating room, try to plan a breastfeeding if the child is with you, or a breast-pumping or hand-expression session to prevent engorgement during the operation. You are encouraged to breastfeed after surgery when you return to your room. If that isn't possible, it is recommended that you draw milk at the time(s) when your child would breastfeed until he/she and you are together again. Depending on the surgery, you may have to temporarily change your breastfeeding position for greater comfort.

### Anesthesia and medications

A very small amount of medication passes through to the breast milk, and an even smaller amount is absorbed by the child. A number of specialized entities and resources have issued an opinion about this: **resuming breastfeeding is possible as soon as you have regained a level of alertness authorizing you to get up.** In fact, **the return to normal mental capacities is a sign that the products have been eliminated.** Therefore, it's rare to have to draw and discard milk. Since pain can interfere with your let-down reflex, it's important to relieve it. Some painkillers may cause you some drowsiness and constipation. Although unlikely, we suggest that you monitor these same effects in your child.