

INFO SHEET

Breastfeeding in a procedure setting

Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de l'Outaouais

Québec 

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND CLINICAL RELEVANCE DIRECTORATE

Your child may continue to breastfeed even if you require sedation.

Plan ahead

Discuss the following points with your care team:

- Inform them that you want to breastfeed your child before and after the procedure.
- Find out how long the procedure normally takes and how long you might be in the recovery room.
- Discuss the usual recovery time, post-procedure pain control and possible movement restrictions.

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

You will probably feel more comfortable if you express enough milk for a few feedings. This milk may not be necessary, but you will be reassured to know that it is available for your child if needed. You can use the breast pump or manually express milk 1-2 times per day for a few days to collect the desired quantity. The milk collected can then be refrigerated for 8 days or frozen for 6 to 12 months depending on the type of freezer¹.

The day of the procedure

With the help of the care team, try to plan a feeding session just prior to your departure for the procedure if the child is with you or use the breast pump or manually express some milk. This is to avoid becoming engorged during the procedure. You are encouraged to breastfeed afterwards as soon as possible. If this is not possible, it is recommended to express milk at the time(s) when your child would normally nurse until you and your child are together again. Depending on the procedure, you may need to temporarily change your breastfeeding position for greater comfort.

Drugs administered

Only very small amounts of medication enter breast milk and an even smaller amount is absorbed by the child.

Breastfeeding may resume as soon as you have regained a level of alertness allowing you to get up. Indeed, regaining your normal mental capacity is a sign that the drugs are no longer in your system. It is therefore rare to have to express and throw out milk. Since pain can interfere with your let-down reflex, it is important to relieve it. Some painkillers may cause some drowsiness and constipation. Although unlikely, we suggest you monitor for these same effects in your child. As a reminder, it is not recommended to have your child share your bed with you. If you still choose to engage in this practice, you should be aware that the associated risks will increase following sedation².

For more information:

1. [Handling Expressed Milk | From Tiny Tot to Toddler | INSPQ](#)
2. [Sleeping Safely | From Tiny Tot to Toddler | INSPQ](#)