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Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and breastfeeding

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It is safer to use nicotine replacement therapy whilst breastfeeding than to smoke.

- NRT products are not licensed to be used by breastfeeding mothers. This means that the manufacturers have not included a statement on their use when they first made the product available. It does not mean they are not safe.
- **Babies will be exposed to less nicotine through NRT than through smoking.** Smoking produces blood levels of nicotine of 44ng/ml whilst NRT patches produce around 17 ng/ml
- NRT avoids exposure to the other chemical compounds in tobacco smoke.
- Mothers should not use NRT and continue to smoke
- Patches applied over a 24 hour period may produce vivid dreams in the mother; it might be advisable to remove the patch overnight so that the baby is exposed to less during night time feeds.
- NRT products do not cause breastmilk to smell of cigarettes.
- Nicotine gum produces large variations in nicotine levels whilst patches produce a sustained but lower level. If gum is used it should be chewed immediately after feeds to reduce the baby's exposure. NRT nasal sprays similarly produce rapid high levels and may best be used after feeds.
- Exposure of the baby to NRT products is believed to be safer than exposure to cigarettes and with appropriate support may help the mother (and ideally her partner) to quit smoking permanently.

NB - Research shows exposure to smoke increases the risk of cot death in babies.

To find your nearest Breastfeeding Supporter call the Supporterline 0300 100 0210

Calls to 0300 numbers cost no more than calls to UK numbers starting 01 and 02 and will be part of any inclusive minutes that apply to your provider and call package

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