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Vaccinations and Breastfeeding Mothers

The information provided is taken from various reference sources. It is provided as a guideline. No responsibility can be taken by the author or the Breastfeeding Network for the way in which the information is used. Clinical decisions remain the responsibility of medical and breastfeeding practitioners. The data presented here is intended to provide some immediate information but cannot replace input from professionals and voluntary breastfeeding personnel.

Vaccinations are poorly bio-available so levels reaching breastmilk are very restricted. Babies may be expected to receive additional antibodies following their mother's vaccination.

Chicken pox (varicella); breastfeeding is not a contraindication to varicella vaccine

Hepatitis A: There is no contra indication to having the vaccination and continuing to breastfeed.

Hepatitis B: Vaccinations are routinely offered to healthcare professionals who may come into contact with body fluids. There is no contra indication to having the vaccination and continuing to breastfeed.

Influenza; A breastfeeding mother can have an influenza vaccination whilst she is breastfeeding – see page 35 (also available on the drug information section of the BfN website).

Meningococcal C: Immunization of pregnant or lactating women with meningococcal vaccine increased the specific secretory IgA content of milk.

MMR Injections: A breastfeeding mother can have an MMR injection if she is not rubella immune. Although live vaccines multiply within the mother's body, the majority have not been demonstrated to be excreted in human milk (Bohlke K, Galil K, Jackson LA, et al. Postpartum varicella vaccination: is the vaccine virus excreted in breast milk? *Obstet Gynecol* 2003;102:970--7). Although rubella vaccine virus might be excreted in human milk, the virus usually does not infect the infant. If infection does occur, it is well-tolerated because the virus is attenuated (182). Inactivated, recombinant, subunit, polysaccharide, conjugate vaccines and toxoids pose no risk for mothers who are breast feeding or for their infants.

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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Pneumonia: A breastfeeding mother can have a Pneumococcal vaccination whilst she is breastfeeding

Polio: The injectable polio vaccine is inactivated and poses no risk when given to mothers who are breastfeeding. The oral vaccine may reduce the production of antibodies by the infant and immunisation of the mother before the infant reaches 6 weeks of age is not recommended.

Tetanus Vaccination: One study of previously vaccinated infants found that at 21 to 40 months of age breastfed infants had higher IgG levels against diphtheria, higher secretory IgA levels in saliva against diphtheria and tetanus and higher fecal IgM against tetanus than formula-fed infants. There is no contra indication to a breastfeeding mother having this vaccination.

Tuberculin and BCG – there is no reason to avoid tuberculin testing during breastfeeding nor to avoid use of the BCG vaccine

Typhoid Vaccination: One study of previously vaccinated infants found that at 21 to 40 months of age breastfed infants had higher IgG levels against diphtheria, higher secretory IgA levels in saliva against diphtheria and tetanus and higher fecal IgM against tetanus than formula-fed infants. There is no contra indication to having the vaccination and continuing to breastfeed.

References

- General recommendations on immunization: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (**ACIP**).
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17136024?dopt=Abstract>
- Breast Feeding and Vaccination: Neither inactivated nor live vaccines administered to a lactating woman affect the safety of breast feeding for women or their infants. Breast feeding does not adversely affect immunization and is not a contraindication for any vaccine, with the exception of smallpox vaccine. Limited data indicate that breast feeding can enhance the response to certain vaccine antigens (Pickering LK, Granoff DM, Erickson JR, et al. Modulation of the immune system by human milk and infant formula containing nucleotides. Pediatrics 1998;101:242--9. Breast-fed infants should be vaccinated according to recommended schedules.
- **LactMed** <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/sis/htmlgen?LACT>
- Hale T Medications and Mothers Milk 2008