

Feeling depressed and Breastfeeding?

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.

You can take anti-depressants and continue to breastfeed without harming your baby.

Around 10-15% of mothers feel depressed during the first year or so after giving birth. Many of them are also breastfeeding. It is nothing to feel ashamed about. It is important to ask for help.

Symptoms of depression are sometimes vague and hard to define but include:

- a persistent feeling of sadness and low mood which goes on for days and weeks
- loss of interest things that used to give you pleasure
- lack of energy, feeling tired all the time
- trouble sleeping at night when your baby is asleep
- problems concentrating and making decisions
- loss of appetite or an increased appetite
- feeling agitated, irritable or that you "can't be bothered")



Our mood varies from day to day, week to week, but if you feel miserable on more days than you feel happy then you should share with those who love you how you feel and think about discussing this with your health visitor or doctor.

If you are feeling miserable because breastfeeding isn't proving to be as easy as you hoped please keep asking for help from local drop in support groups or by calling the National Breastfeeding Helpline.

The drug of choice for someone who has never had depression before is sertraline which passes into breastmilk in very low levels. If you have been treated for depression before, the drug which is best for you is probably the one which helped you then. For more detailed information, visit www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/antidepressants.

If anyone tells you that you have to stop breastfeeding in order to take a medication please contact the Drugs in Breastmilk Helpline via facebook (www.facebook.com/BfNDrugsinBreastmilkinformation) or email (drug-information@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) and we will discuss this with you and help you find information based on research.

To talk to a mum who knows about breastfeeding call the National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212

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.