

Breastfeeding while pregnant

Can you get pregnant while breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding is considered a **natural but temporary form of birth control**. It is called the lactation amenorrhea method (LAM) of birth control. LAM is effective only if you breastfeed exclusively and frequently. The time between two feedings must be less than 4 hours in the day or 6 hours at night.



*Breastfeeding releases the hormone **prolactin** to stimulate milk production*



*Elevated levels of prolactin **reduce hormones needed for ovulation***



*No ovulation **pregnancy less likely to occur***

Many woman may be concerned about continuing to breastfeed after finding out about being pregnant. One of the first questions that come to mind is will this affect the unborn child. **Is my unborn child getting enough nutrients? Is this safe?**

Breastfeeding during a normal pregnancy is safe and "does not increase the chance of adverse maternal or newborn outcomes."

CHANGES DURING PREGNANCY

Uterine contractions: Breastfeeding stimulates the release of the hormone oxytocin, which helps with milk let-down and can also cause mild uterine contractions. In most healthy, uncomplicated pregnancies, these contractions are not considered harmful.



Changes in breast milk: Hormonal changes can affect its composition, taste, and supply. Milk production often decreases as pregnancy progresses, and the milk may become saltier before transitioning to colostrum later in pregnancy.



Nutritional demands: Mothers who continue breastfeeding during pregnancy should consume a well-balanced diet, stay well hydrated, and ensure adequate calorie intake to support their own health, the developing fetus, and the breastfeeding child.



Potential risks in high-risk pregnancies: pregnancies with complications or risk factors, healthcare providers may advise caution. Concerns such as reduced fetal growth, low birth weight, preterm birth, miscarriage, or stillbirth are primarily related to the underlying high-risk pregnancy rather than breastfeeding itself.



TANDEM FEEDING

During the first few days after birth, Nancy Mohrbacher (2010) recommends giving the newborn priority at the breast to ensure they receive the colostrum, which is rich in nutrients and protective antibodies.

Tandem nursing can also help relieve breast engorgement and support the establishment and maintenance of an adequate milk supply. Breasts typically adjust milk production to match the demands placed on them, so if they are nursing both a baby and a toddler, they can usually produce enough milk for both.