

Alcohol Transfers to Breast Milk ▼

Alcohol passes freely into breast milk, with levels in milk approximately equivalent to the levels in the mother's bloodstream.¹



Alcohol reaches peak levels in breast milk 30-60 minutes after consumption.¹



Timeline for Alcohol Detection

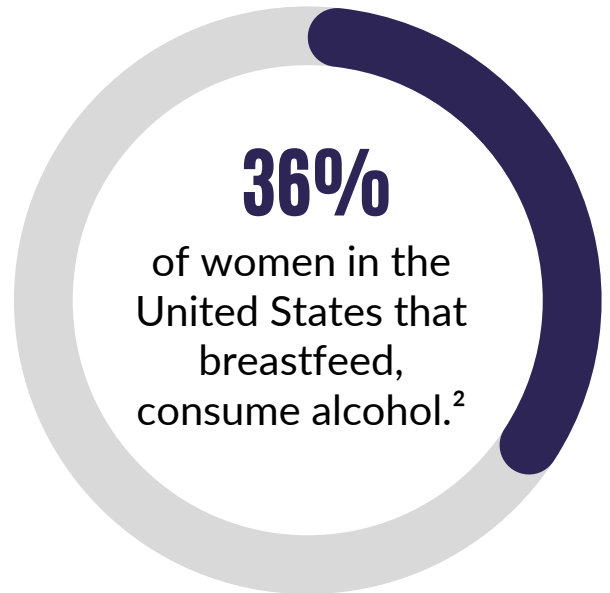
The time alcohol stays in breastmilk increases with each additional drink.¹

- 1 drink = 2-3 hours detectable
- 2 drinks = 4-5 hours detectable
- 3 drinks = 6-8 hours detectable

Pumping and Dumping Myth ▼

Fact: Expressing milk after drinking alcohol and discarding it, "pumping and dumping", does not speed up alcohol elimination from milk. The newly produced milk will still contain alcohol as long as the women has measurable blood alcohol levels.⁴

What to Do: Express milk before drinking or wait for alcohol levels to drop naturally.



Factors Affecting Alcohol Duration ▼

Other factors that influence the length of time alcohol can be detected in breast milk include³:



How fast alcohol is consumed



Whether alcohol is consumed with food



Weight of the person consuming alcohol



Rate alcohol is metabolized

CDC Guidelines on Alcohol and Breastfeeding³



Not drinking alcohol is the safest option while breastfeeding.



Up to 1 standard drink/day is generally not harmful to infants.



Wait at least 2 hours after consuming alcohol before breastfeeding.

- Waiting allows alcohol levels in breast milk to decrease. If the women breastfeeding cannot wait to feed her infant, she can feed milk that was previously expressed when alcohol was not consumed.

Alcohol's Impact on Newborns



Alcohol's Impact on Milk Production



Newborns metabolize alcohol **25%-50%** slower than adults.⁵ Blood alcohol levels in a nursing infant depend on the amount of alcohol in breast milk, but also on the infant's capacity to metabolize alcohol.²



Alcohol does not stimulate milk production (not a galactagogue) and has been shown to decrease milk production. It inhibits the release of oxytocin, the hormone responsible for the milk ejection reflex, known as "letdown."⁶



Long-term Cognitive Effects



While data on long-term outcomes are mixed, some studies have shown a dose-dependent association between exposure to higher levels of alcohol through breastmilk and cognitive function.⁴



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