



BREASTFEEDING WITH EPILEPSY: A GUIDE



COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- Infants absorb the same level of your anti-epileptic drug while you breastfeed
- Breastfeeding while taking anti-epileptic drugs drastically increases your child's risk of developmental delay
- It is not safe to breastfeed while taking antiepileptic drugs



CURRENT RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Per the American Academy of Neurology and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, it is safe to breast feed on lamotrigine
- Studies show that breast fed infant levels of lamotrigine are on average 29% of their mother's level
- Levetiracetam levels of breast fed infants have shown to be on average 5.3% of their mothers level
- The NEAD study shows no negative impact on the infant development if the mother chose to breastfeed while on AEDs

TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

First and foremost, speak with your doctor about your options for breastfeeding while taking certain anti-epileptic drug medications.



HEALTH BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

For children, breastfeeding reduces the risk of:

- severe lower respiratory tract infections
- atopic dermatitis
- asthma
- acute otitis media
- nonspecific gastroenteritis
- obesity
- type I & II diabetes
- childhood leukemia
- sudden child death syndrome
- necrotizing enterocolitis

and has positive cognitive effects

For mom's, breastfeeding reduces the risk of:

- breast cancer
- ovarian cancer
- type II diabetes
- post partum depression



RESOURCES:

Birbaum A. K., Meador K. J., Karanam A., et al. Antiepileptic Drug Exposure in Infants of Breastfeeding Mothers With Epilepsy. *Jama Neurol.* 2020; 77(4):441–450.

Meador K. J., Baker G. A., Browning N., et al; NEAD Study Group. Cognitive function at 3 years of age after fetal exposure to antiepileptic drugs. *N Engl J Med.* 2009; 360(16):1597-1605. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa0803531

Meador K. J., Baker G. A., Browning N., et al; Neurodevelopmental Effects of Antiepileptic Drugs (NEAD) Study Group. Breastfeeding in children of women taking antiepileptic drugs: cognitive outcomes at age 6 years. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2014; 168 (8): 729-736. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.118

Veigby G., Engelsen B. A., Gilhus N. E. Early child development and exposure to antiepileptic drugs prenatally and through breastfeeding: A prospective cohort study on children of women with epilepsy. *JAMA Neurol.* 2013; 70(11): 1367-1374. doi:10.1001/jamaneuro.2013.4290