Medication in Lactation

Indications to review medication safety in breastfeeding:
- During prenatal care, ideally at 28-32 weeks, to provide anticipatory guidance and assist with feeding decisions
- On admission when delivery is anticipated
- When prescribing or recommending medications for a lactating woman

Breastfeeding mother needs medication(s)
Effective non-pharmacologic therapy not available

Drug(s) systemically absorbed?

If members of the management team have concerns about medication exposure, a mother can express and store milk pending a shared decision-making discussion.

DO NOT DISCARD EXPRESSED MILK UNTIL THIS DISCUSSION HAS OCCURRED.

Preterm / sick baby OR
Mother requires 3 or more L3 medications, OR any L4/L5

Call Infant Risk Center (806) 352-2519
Consider Breastfeeding Medicine Consult

Review information with mother and with infant’s provider
Discuss risks of drug exposure via milk vs risk of disrupting breastfeeding.

Support shared decision with mother:
- Continue breastfeeding with medication
- Express & discard milk for duration of treatment
- Initiate / continue medication and wean

Counseling and follow-up
2. Review information from MMM and LactMed with mother and discuss risks of infant drug exposure vs. risks of disrupting breastfeeding for both mother and infant
3. Include MMM I-rating and LactMed summary for the selected drug in patient AVS. Consider printing entire LactMed monograph and Medications and Mother’s Milk Summary and placing in chart / providing copy to mother to share with the infant’s provider.
4. With mother’s permission, copy infant’s provider on encounter documentation so that s/he can follow infant for any side effects.
5. When mother is taking medication and breastfeeding:
   a. Encourage her to share LactMed and MMM information with her infant’s provider
   b. Review common / worrisome infant side effects
   c. Advise her that pharmacists may instruct her not to use the drug while breastfeeding, despite safety data
   d. Provide contact number for her to call with questions.
6. Time dose to minimize exposure, if possible: after feeding or before prolonged infant sleep.
Medications in Lactation Quick Reference
Common scenarios in which lactation should NOT be interrupted

General anesthesia
"Mothers with normal term or older infants can generally resume breastfeeding as soon as they are awake, stable, and alert. Resumption of normal mentation is a hallmark that these medications have redistributed from the plasma compartment (and thus generally the milk compartment) and entered adipose and muscle tissue where they are slowly released."\(^1\)

If a lactating woman is undergoing a surgical procedure, it’s optimal for her to feed or pump right before her surgery, and then be able to feed or express milk 2-3 hours later, so that she does not become engorged.

Morphine is the preferred narcotic for breastfeeding women because of its poor bioavailability. Detailed recommendations regarding postoperative pain management are available from the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine\(^1\).

IV contrast studies
Both the American Academy of Pediatrics\(^2\) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists\(^3,4\) concur that lactation should not be interrupted after IV contrast for CT or MRI studies. UNC’s policy on imaging in pregnancy and lactation similarly states that mothers do not need to express and discard milk after IV contrast.


Anticipatory guidance for prenatal consults
Some medications may be reasonable for mothers who are breastfeeding term, healthy infants, but may be problematic for preterm or sick infants. Mothers should be counseled accordingly, as noted in the LACTPTEDMEDICATIONS SmartPhrase:

This information is for healthy, full term babies. If your baby {is/was:41136} born early or has health problems, some of these medicines might not be safe in breastfeeding. Your baby's doctor might ask you to pump and store your milk until your baby is healthy. If this is needed, your baby can be fed donor breast milk or formula.

Substance use in breastfeeding women\(^5,6\)
Smoking, social alcohol use, and opiate replacement therapy are not contraindications to breastfeeding. A mother with active use of other substances should be counseled by her provider and the infant’s provider regarding risks and benefits of continued lactation. This discussion should be documented in the patient's chart by the physician or midlevel provider, and the resulting decision should be communicated to the lactation team.

Infectious diseases and Breastfeeding\(^6\)

Permanent contraindications
1) Maternal HIV; 2) human T-lymphotropic virus type I/II infection

Temporary contraindications
1) Active, untreated varicella; 2) Active HSV lesion on the breast - mother may feed from other breast if clear of lesions; 3) Hepatitis C with active bleeding from the nipple; 4) Active or suspected pulmonary TB. Milk can be expressed and fed to the infant by a non-infected person until the mother has been treated sufficiently to be non-contagious.
Obtaining a pump for a patient at UNC
Place an order in Epic for a lactation consultation AND call the main lactation mobile number (4-5435) to arrange a pump – if no answer (overnight) call 5 Women’s (4-1377) for access to a pump. Pumps are managed by lactation, not by patient equipment.

To order a pump kit to go with the pump, place an order from central supply for CD # 001704 (double pumping kit). If unable to secure an electric pump- or need to send a manual pump home with the patient - place an order from central supply for CD# 050626 for the Harmony Manual pump.

Symphony Inservice Video
https://www.medelabreastfeedingus.com/video-page/69/symphony-inservice-video

References


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These algorithms are designed to assist the primary care provider in the clinical management of a variety of problems that occur during pregnancy. They should not be interpreted as a standard of care, but instead represent guidelines for management. Variation in practices should take into account such factors as characteristics of the individual patient, health resources, and regional experience with diagnostic and therapeutic modalities.

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