



Breastfeeding tips & techniques:

# Breastfeeding and Surgery



*If you need surgery or need to go to the hospital while breastfeeding, relax! You will still be able to maintain your milk supply and continue breastfeeding your baby.*

## Talk to your doctor

Talk to your doctor before the surgery/hospitalization and let him or her know that you are breastfeeding. Ask what types of medications he or she will be using so you can use one that is safe for use while breastfeeding. Also, most of the pain medications used in hospitals after surgery are safe.

## Medications and breastfeeding

If you are worried about your baby receiving medications through your breast milk, then pump your breasts approximately 4 to 6 hours after the surgery and discard this milk.

There are some types of medications that may require you to pump and discard your milk for 24 hours. Your doctor will let you know when you can start breastfeeding again.

## Feeding the baby

Find out whether hospital policy allows a family member to bring the baby into your room so that you can breastfeed when you feel up to it. Most of the time a family member will need to stay in the room with you to help you feed the baby. While you are away, keep the feeding schedule the same. Make sure that someone feeds the baby from your stored milk supply or with infant formula while you are in the hospital.

## Pumping in advance

If you cannot have the baby in the hospital room with you, then you will need to pump your breasts every 3 to 4 hours to maintain your milk supply. You can either bring a pump from home or ask to use one of the hospital's pumps. Not all hospitals have maternity units so find out ahead of time whether or not a breast pump will be available.

continued 

Need  
**breastfeeding**  
advice or help?

It is OK to **ASK** for help:

**CALL** your doctor or pediatrician > **REFER** to the numerous resources listed at [www.abbottnutrition.com/breastfeeding](http://www.abbottnutrition.com/breastfeeding)

Quality assured in conjunction with:



Help line open M-F, 8:30 AM to 7 PM ET  
Call Feeding Expert: 1-800-986-8800





It is also recommended to begin pumping and storing milk as soon as you know that you will be having surgery. This can help build up a supply for while you are in the hospital. If you have a few days' notice, begin to pump and store your milk in the refrigerator or freezer.

### Getting enough rest

Arrange for friends and family members to help you once you are discharged from the hospital. If you are tired, they can bring the baby to you and help you get set up for breastfeeding. Getting enough rest is very important so your body has a chance to heal.

