

Breastfeeding

A Quick Guide to Common Questions



Why Breastfeed?

There are many reasons to consider breastfeeding

Breast milk helps keep your baby healthy *

It supplies all the necessary nutrients in the proper amounts. Additionally, breast milk can protect against allergies, sickness, and obesity and even against diseases, like diabetes and cancer. It is also easily digested, contributes to a healthy weight, and has long term cognitive benefits.

Breast milk changes constantly to meet babies' needs *

Breast milk changes in volume and composition according to the time of day, nursing frequency, and age of baby to promote healthy growth.

Breastfeeding can also be beneficial for mom *

Breastfeeding provides health benefits for mothers, including a reduced risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Additionally, breastfeeding helps to support the recovery process following childbirth and may enhance the bonding process between mother and baby.

* Source: NYS WIC

Lean more here: [Ready, Set, Baby](#).



What about other medications/drugs?

It varies...

Prescription and Over the Counter Medication *

Some are safe, and some are not. Some might also affect your supply amount. If you are taking any medication, it is best to consult your doctor before breastfeeding.

Alcohol *

Alcohol can pass through breastmilk and harm your baby. However, there are ways to avoid alcohol exposure if you do plan on drinking. This may include waiting at least 2-3 hours after each drink before breastfeeding, using alcohol test strips to test your supply, or breastfeeding/pumping before you drink.

Illegal Substances *

Research shows that women who use certain substances while breastfeeding may inadvertently expose their babies to substances that can cause long-term detrimental effects. If you are struggling to reduce or stop your substance use, please speak with your provider or trusted support person.

Marijuana/CBD *

Even though marijuana is legal for medicinal or recreational use in some states, it is not recommended for use by mothers who are breastfeeding. You may pass THC and other chemicals from marijuana to your baby through breast milk. Data is still emerging, but experts advise breastfeeding mothers to abstain from any use, including CBD products.

* Source: March of Dimes

Looking for information and support?

[MotherToBaby CT](#) provides free, confidential, up-to-date information on all types of exposures for women who are considering a pregnancy, pregnant, or nursing.



What if breastfeeding isn't possible for me?

That's OK! Breastfeeding does not define you as a parent.

We are all unique individuals with different life situations, health histories and experiences. If you choose not to breastfeed, you should be provided with appropriate information and education to feed your baby. For some women, breastfeeding may not be an option. No matter the reason, the choice to breastfeed is a personal one and should be respected. We know mothers want what is best for their children and should be supported and empowered in their parenting.

If you choose not to breastfeed, there are still great ways you can bond with your baby such as skin to skin contact, reading, singing, eye contact, etc.



I'm in MAT, can I breastfeed?



Talk to your doctor...

Breastfeeding while on medically prescribed methadone or buprenorphine is usually safe and encouraged. The amount of either medication found in breastmilk is very low and may also help your baby with neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS) symptoms they might experience.

It is always important to consult your provider first, especially if you are on other medications that might affect your supply

What support is available?



Help is available - you have many options!

Many moms say that getting support from their healthcare providers helped them meet their breast feeding goals. You don't have to do it alone! Reach out to your healthcare providers, family, friends, workplace, school, and/or local support organizations and resources. Community support is readily available to you right here in Connecticut. Having good support can help you meet your breastfeeding goals.

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors are available to at some [local WIC offices](#) and [local support groups](#) can help you navigate challenges

Make a plan with [friends and family](#) and/or your return to [school/work](#) by making a checklist

HUSKY Healthy Beginnings is a free program for HUSKY members. Services also include appointment and transportation assistance and baby/breastfeeding supplies. **Call 800-859-9889 ext. 2025**

[211](#) and [Zip Milk](#) can guide you to you local breastfeeding resources

What are my rights?



CT has laws to protect your right to breastfeeding in public and pump or express your milk in the workplace.

Other laws related to reasonable accommodation may also apply to your situation. There are also Federal laws that can protect your right to breastfeed. The resources below can help you understand your rights

You can access a summary of CT's laws here: [Pregnant at Work](#)

If you have questions about workplace issues related to pregnancy, breastfeeding, or caregiving responsibilities call the **Center for WorkLife Law's free legal hotline to talk to a lawyer.**

- Email hotline@worklifelaw.org
- Call (415) 703-8276

If you feel you need to file a complaint in CT, the [Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities](#) and the [CT Department of Labor](#) both support women in the workplace.

Substance Use and Recovery Support

[CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)

[DMHAS Addiction Services Bed Availability](#)

[CT 24/7 Treatment Access Line:](#)
1-800-563-4086

[Women's REACH Program](#)

[CT Community for Addiction Recovery](#)

[LiveLOUD](#)

Additional Breastfeeding Support Resources

[Ready, Set Baby](#)

[WIC \(National\)](#)

[WIC \(CT\)](#)

[Breastfeeding USA](#)

Resource Links

Ready Set Baby - <https://www.readysetbabyonline.com/breastfeeding-basics/benefits/#content-container>

WIC Source - <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/breastfeeding/importance.htm>

March of Dimes Source - <https://www.marchofdimes.org/baby/keeping-breast-milk-safe-and-healthy.aspx>

Mother to Baby - <https://health.uconn.edu/medical-genetics/mothertobaby-ct-2/mothertobaby-ct/>

Local WIC offices - <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/WIC/Find-a-Local-Agency>

Local Support Groups - <https://www.lllct.org/local-support>

It's Worth It Checklist -

http://www.itsworthitct.org/uploads/7/6/2/7/76278053/make_it_work_checklist_print_englishandspanish.pdf

211 Resources - <https://uwc.211ct.org/informationlibrarydocumentsfirst-time-motherhoodbreastfeedingresources-asp/>

Zip Milk - <https://www.zipmilk.org/states/connecticut>

Pregnant At Work - <http://www.pregnantatwork.org/workplace-lactation-laws/?location=ct>

Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities - <https://portal.ct.gov/CHRO/Commission/Commission/Contact-Us>

CT Department of Labor - <https://ctdol.jotform.com/CT1/DOLHelp>

Substance Use and Recovery Support

Women's REACH Program - <https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS/Programs-and-Services/Women/Womens-REACH-Program>

DMHAS Addiction Services - <https://www.ctaddictionservices.com>

24/7 Addiction help line - <https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS/Programs-and-Services/Finding-Services/Transportation#:~:text=DMHAS%20has%20established%20the%202024,prioritize%20transportation%20services%20for%20detox.>

CT Community for Addiction Recovery - <https://ccar.us>

Live Loud - <https://liveloud.org>

Additional Breast Feeding Support

Ready, Set, Baby - <https://www.readysetbabyonline.com/>

WIC (National) - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

WIC (CT) - <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/WIC/WIC>

Breastfeeding USA - <https://breastfeedingusa.org/content/breastfeeding-counselor-locations>