



Breastfeeding for the Mother Having Surgery

Breastfeeding can continue even if you need to have an operation. Here are some things to think about as you plan to interrupt breastfeeding as little as possible.

Planning Ahead

- Talk to your doctor and other care providers to tell them about your breastfeeding plans.
- Find out how long your procedure or surgery might take.
- Discuss recovery time and pain control issues. It is possible that the length of your surgery could mean you are unavailable to your baby for a feeding or more.
- Ask about what movement restrictions you may expect.
- If there are special concerns, then make sure to talk to one of the lactation consultants at 206-598-4628.

Talk with your family and/or friends about getting some help with baby care and make sure they know that breastfeeding will continue past your operation. Our policy at UWMC is to encourage you to have your baby stay with you or visit as much as possible. You *will* need another adult to care for your baby in your room so that you will be free to recover and rest without the responsibility of childcare.

Plan to have at least one or two feedings of pumped milk stored in the fridge or freezer for use on the day of your surgery. You may not need to give these bottles, but you will probably feel more comfortable knowing they're there just in case.



Questions ?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Labor and Delivery
206-598-4616

Postpartum
206-598-5600

**Maternity and Infant
Care Clinic**
206-598-4070

UW Lactation Services
206-598-4628
Hours: 9 a.m.-9 p.m.
Monday-Friday and
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
weekends and
holidays

For most women, the best time to pump extra milk is right after a breastfeeding session. You may find it helpful to do a pumping session or two for a few days to collect enough milk. Store it for up to eight days in the fridge and six months in a freezer that freezes ice cream solid. If you are concerned about whether your baby will take a bottle, call a lactation consultant at 206-598-4628.

Anesthesia and Medicines

Breastfeeding mothers are often concerned about the medicines that are given before, during and after surgery. Many companies that make the drugs suggest discarding your milk for 24 hours following surgery, but recent studies have shown that very little of these medicines enter the milk and even less is absorbed by the baby. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics approves many of the medicines used with surgery for use by breastfeeding mothers. So, it is usually not necessary to pump and discard your milk.

The Day of Surgery

You will need to plan on feeding your baby or pumping your breasts as close to the time of surgery as possible. This will help keep your breasts from becoming overly full. Talk to the nurses about whether you can plan on breastfeeding your baby soon after the procedure. If you don't breastfeed after your surgery, then you should plan on using an electric pump for 10 to 15 minutes at normal feeding intervals until you and the baby are reunited. While in the hospital, your nurse can order a double electric pump to be available within about an hour's notice for your use before or after your procedure. If you have any questions or concerns about breastfeeding or pumping during this time, you or your nurse can call a lactation consultant at 206-598-4628.



**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER**

Maternity and Infant Center

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