

# Aeroflow Breastpumps

## Caffeine and Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is one of the only areas of health where healthcare providers have to look at a “dyad” - you and your baby. Either you or your baby could have different reactions to a substance, so it’s important to consider both of you during an assessment.

### Consuming Caffeine

In most cases, babies only take in small amounts of caffeine, about 1.5% of what the mother takes in.<sup>1</sup> The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that 300 mg or less per day (2-3 cups of coffee) is acceptable.<sup>2</sup> However, you may want to take the following into consideration:

- Is my baby more likely to react to caffeine?
- What symptoms might my baby have?
- What other drinks and foods might have caffeine in them?
- How much caffeine is safe to consume?
- What can I try if I think my baby is reacting to caffeine?

Caffeine is also a diuretic, meaning that it helps get rid of fluids from the body. It is important that pregnant mothers who use caffeine stay well-hydrated by drinking enough water.<sup>3</sup>

### What To Look For

In general, caffeine is a safe substance, but you or your baby could have difficulty tolerating it. You should observe your baby’s behavior and sleep patterns to find clues as to whether or not your baby is struggling. Symptoms to look for include<sup>4</sup>:

- Unhappiness
- Jitteriness
- Colicky behavior (i.e.-intense crying and fussiness for long periods of time)
- Poor sleep patterns
- Change in stool patterns or consistency
- Some side effects would be more difficult for you to observe in your baby such as heart arrhythmias

The more caffeine, the more obvious the sensitivities may be, so it is generally best to stay away from heavily caffeinated or "turbo" energy drinks. If you start to notice your baby showing any of these symptoms, you may want to cut back or stop consuming caffeine for two

to three weeks to see if you see a change in your baby's behavior.<sup>5</sup> If your baby is sensitive, it may take a few days or more to see these changes in behavior.

### **Cutting Back**

Caffeine can stay in the body for two to twelve hours.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, each person has a personal sensitivity factor to caffeine. For example, some adults can handle four cups of coffee where others can only have one. Caffeine peaks at one to two hours in breast milk.<sup>7</sup> There are also some reports of reduced iron content in milk due to long-term caffeine intake which can lower hemoglobin and hematocrit levels causing iron-deficiency anemia.<sup>7</sup> These are all great reasons to cut back on your caffeine intake.

To many mothers, cutting out caffeine may seem impossible. Then, adding the needs of your baby to your life can create more of a challenge. To reduce intake, you should start slowly to reduce potential withdrawal symptoms if you have been chronically ingesting caffeine.<sup>8</sup> It is ideal to reduce consumption in small quantities every two to three days until you have reached a desired level of caffeine intake for you and your baby.<sup>9</sup> The best place to look for caffeine content is on the ingredients label. However, there are several online resources that provide information regarding caffeine content of popular foods, drinks, and other items that may contain caffeine.

### **What If I Have Questions?**

If you are interested in learning more, these Aeroflow classes expand on some of the topics discussed above:

- Lactation Q&A
- Birth & Breastfeeding
- Ultimate Breastfeeding Prep

To register for these classes, log into your portal or click [here](#).

### **Want More Info?**

For a directory of Aeroflow's other Care Guides offering information on pregnancy, baby care, and more, browse our comprehensive list of titles:

<https://www.hersourcehealth.com/aeroflow-care-guides/>

### **References:**

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5. <https://lli.org/breastfeeding-info/caffeine/>
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