



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information

BREASTFEEDING AFTER A CT SCAN WITH CONTRAST DYE

What is a contrast dye?

Contrast dye is used to make parts of the body easier to see in a CT (computed tomography) scan. It may be necessary to use a contrast dye to diagnose certain health problems.

Contrast dyes contain iodine. This is the same mineral that is added to table salt. The amount of iodine in the contrast dye used is considered safe for babies, children and adults.

Can I breastfeed after the CT scan?

Research suggests it is safe to continue breastfeeding after your CT scan.

You do not need to stop breastfeeding for any amount of time unless you choose to.

- After a CT scan with contrast dye, a small amount of iodine can be found in breastmilk.
- Only a tiny amount of the contrast, less than 1% passes from you to your baby in your breastmilk.
- There are theoretical concerns about potential risks to the infant which include allergic sensitization/reaction, or direct toxicity, but these have not been confirmed in the medical literature.

Many babies, including those that are premature, have a CT scan and receive contrast dye.

What if I choose to wait to breastfeed?

If you are concerned about your baby's exposure, you may choose to wait for 12 hours after receiving the contrast dye before breastfeeding. If you decide to do this, you will need to hand express/pump your breasts every 3 hours to keep up your milk supply and lower the risk of breast infection. You can feed your baby previously stored breastmilk that you have stored until you resume breastfeeding your baby.

- After 12 hours, even the trace amounts of iodine will be cleared from your system. Continue breastfeeding in response to your baby's feeding cues.
- Contact your Public Health Nurse, Lactation Consultant or a health care provider knowledgeable about breastfeeding if you have any questions about milk removal.

References:

American College of Radiology. (2018). Manual on Contrast Media. Retrieved from <https://www.acr.org/Clinical-Resources/Contrast-Manual>

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