

Can I Breastfeed With Breast Implants?



If you are one of the millions of people who have breast implants, you likely have concerns about breastfeeding your baby with your implants in place.¹ You may be wondering if your surgery could impact your ability to produce a full milk supply. People whose breast implants are made of silicone might be worried about silicone leaking into their breastmilk and harming their baby.

Thankfully, it's not only safe to breastfeed with implants, but most people are also able to produce an adequate supply of breast milk.² Read on for what to know about breastfeeding with implants, including safety, milk supply issues, benefits, and how to address any concerns or complications that may arise.

Breastfeeding With Breast Implants

The two main concerns that people with breast implants have about breastfeeding have to do with safety and milk supply. Luckily, there's good news on both fronts.

According to Karen Horton, MD, plastic surgeon and a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, breastfeeding with implants is not harmful; furthermore, with a few exceptions, most parents are able to produce a full supply of breastmilk for their little ones. "There's no reason to avoid breastfeeding with implants at all," Dr. Horton assured, adding that there are no particular safety precautions you need to take as you get ready to breastfeed your baby.

Let's take a closer look at these two issues, along with expert advice.

Concerns About Silicone

Many parents with implants are concerned that the contents of their implants—particularly if their implants are made of silicone—will leak into their breastmilk and harm their babies. You can rest assured that this isn't something you need to stress over, says [Lauren Nigro](#), MD, a plastic surgeon who provides advanced breast reconstruction surgeries. “Breastfeeding with implants is not harmful to the mother or baby and implant contents do not transfer to the baby,” says Dr. Nigro.

Research backs up this reassuring news. One study found that levels of silicone in breast milk were no different in people with implants as opposed to people without implants.³ Additionally, both the CDC² and FDA⁴ have stated that there is no evidence of higher levels of silicone in breast milk among people with implants. Finally, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has released a statement saying that having breast implants is not a contraindication to breastfeeding.⁵

Milk Supply

In most cases, people who have implants will be able to successfully breastfeed their babies. For example, a 2016 study found that 93% of parents with implants were able to establish breastfeeding and were breastfeeding (exclusively or with supplements) by 30 days postpartum.⁶ Another study found that among people with breast implants, about 75% were able to successfully breastfeed.⁷

Often, the reasons why people with implants have trouble breastfeeding have to do with the same reasons any new parent might have—latch issues, short maternity leave, and/or lack of support. But in some cases, the implant surgery can impact your ability to produce a full supply of milk. It all depends on where the incisions were made, though, says Michael Horn, MD, a plastic surgeon from Chicago, Illinois.

Factors that can impact milk supply may include the size and placement of the implants as well as how the surgery was executed, says Dr. Horn. “If the incisions are under the breast fold or through the armpit, breastfeeding shouldn’t be a problem,” says Dr. Horn. “On the other hand, if the incision was made around the areola, there’s a chance the milk ducts may have been cut, and therefore breastfeeding can be challenging.”²

One other aspect to keep in mind when it comes to breastfeeding with implants is why you had implant surgery in the first place. “In women who have undergone mastectomies to remove breast cancer with implant-based breast reconstruction, they should not have any remaining glandular breast tissue to support lactation,” explains Dr. Nigro. Moreover, people with a history of hypoplastic or tubular breasts may have trouble breastfeeding successfully, says Dr. Nigro.⁸

Still, Dr. Horn says that even with people who might run into issues because of where in the breast their surgery took place, or other conditions that may impact breastfeeding, it’s good to keep an open mind and not assume the worst.

“There’s no way of truly knowing how much milk will be produced until you attempt breastfeeding,” he says.

Benefits of Breastfeeding With Breast Implants

Denise Moses, MD, OB/GYN at Long Island Jewish Forest Hills in Queens, NY, enthusiastically recommends that parents with implants breastfeed their babies. Not only is it safe, but the benefits to babies are immense, she notes. “There is a huge benefit to the baby when they are fed with breast milk,” says Dr. Moses.

Some parents with implants aren’t able to bring in a full milk supply, either because of where their breast implant surgery took place or because of a preexisting condition like hypoplasia or breast cancer, which makes bringing in a full supply challenging. But as the CDC notes, having a full supply isn’t a prerequisite to successful breastfeeding.²

The benefits of breastmilk for infants include decreased respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, fewer ear infections, and lower rates of SIDS, asthma, and obesity.⁹ And remember: Every drop counts and helps keep your baby healthy, whether you are exclusively breastfeeding or not.

Safety Precautions

Experts agree that breastfeeding with implants is safe and you don’t have to take any special precautions to do it. Although most people with implants don’t run into any roadblocks to successful breastfeeding related to their implants,

sometimes implants create complications. Here's what to know about preventing these complications and any precautions you may need to take.

Consider Getting an MRI to Ensure Your Implant Is Intact

Studies have shown that silicone does not leak into breast milk.⁴ Even so, if you are concerned about that possibility, and for your own peace of mind, Dr. Nigro recommends getting an MRI to make sure your implants are intact and have not ruptured. Doing this is not mandatory, though. Either way, routine screening for ruptures is something the FDA recommends you do five years after your implants have been put in, and every two to three years after that.¹⁰

Take Steps to Maximize Your Milk Supply

Because some people encounter milk supply issues when they have implants, it can be helpful to take special care to ensure that your milk supply is established well from the start. To do this, Dr. Moses recommends breastfeeding frequently and maximizing the time your baby spends at the breast. If you have to supplement, Dr. Moses suggests considering breastfeeding-friendly ways of doing this, such as supplementing at the breast with an SNS (supplemental nursing device) or using "paced bottle feeding," where you feed your baby slowly and with a slow-flow nipple.

"Remember not to overstress," says Dr. Moses. "The important thing is that your baby is fed—many women that have a lower milk supply after breast implants are still able to breastfeed with supplementation and that's OK."

Stay in Touch With Your Support Team

You don't have to assume that you will have milk supply issues, but if you do end up having them, it's important to stay in touch with your child's pediatrician and breastfeeding support team. Dr. Horn recommends telling the pediatrician that you have implants so that they can pay careful attention to your baby's weight gain.

He also says that some breastfeeding parents with implants may experience more serious bouts of engorgement and mastitis (a breast infection). "When breastfeeding with implants, your breasts can feel much harder and more painful when they become engorged," Dr. Horn describes. "If you get mastitis, which is common in breastfeeding women, the symptoms can be more intense than usual."¹¹

Again, this is not a reason to panic, but it's something to be aware of. It's all the more reason to have your pediatrician's number on speed dial, and to connect to a lactation consultant or breastfeeding counselor, should you run into any problems.

A Word From Verywell

Breastfeeding with breast implants is safe, and in most cases, parents are able to meet their breastfeeding goals. If exclusive breastfeeding is not in the cards for you for whatever reason, remember that's OK, too! Should you end up encountering any issues with breastfeeding, reach out for support from your child's pediatrician or a breastfeeding support person.

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/can-i-breastfeed-with-breast-implants-5496697>