

Breastfeeding after you have an intravenous contrast agent injection

Introduction

This leaflet is for mothers who are breastfeeding their babies and have been given an intravenous contrast agent injection as part of a CT (Computed Tomography) scan. Breastfeeding mothers of premature babies should follow the advice given to them by their medical team.

What is a CT scanner?

A CT scanner is an X-ray machine which produces images (pictures) of the body. The scanner has a 'doughnut' shaped gantry (structure), about 2 feet thick, which you pass through on a couch.



Figure 1: CT scanner

What is an intravenous contrast injection?

To make it easier to see blood vessels and organs in the body a contrast agent is used as it shows up whiter on the CT Images than the surrounding tissue or organs.

The contrast is injected into a vein via a small cannula (plastic tube) usually in the back of the hand or elbow and is known as an intravenous injection.

Reference No.

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Department

Radiology

Review due

November 2024

**Patient
Information****Is it safe to breast feed afterwards?**

The Royal College of Radiologists (who provide guidance for the X-ray department) states that it is not necessary to stop breastfeeding after having a contrast injection.

Only a very small amount of the contrast agent received by a breastfeeding patient will make its way into the breast milk. The risk of harm to the baby is extremely low.

What will happen if I decide to take a break from breastfeeding following an intravenous contrast injection?

If you choose to take a break from breastfeeding you will need to express enough milk before having the injection procedure to provide for your child for 24 hours after the procedure. You will also need to express for 24 hours after the contrast injection and throw away any milk produced.

If milk is not expressed before your CT scan, your child will need to be fed with formula milk for 24 hours after the procedure.

If you do choose to stop breastfeeding, but are worried about what this could mean for you and your baby, please discuss with your midwife or health advisor.

Contact information

If you have any queries please discuss these with your midwife or health advisor. Alternatively you can contact the CT Department on the following number and request a radiographer to call you back to discuss any queries:

CT Appointments

Tel: 0300 422 5691

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:45pm

**Patient
Information**

Reference

The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR). *Standards for intravascular contrast agent administration to adult patients* [online]. 3rd Edition. London: The Royal College of Radiologists, 2015.

Available from:

www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Intravasc_contrast_web.pdf

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