

Pain relief when you go home

Prior to discharge, you will be advised on suitable pain relief to take at home if indicated. Please ask for advice from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any questions.

Paracetamol and NSAIDs like ibuprofen or diclofenac are safe to take when breastfeeding.

Codeine containing medications (found in Solpadeine, Solpadol and Nurofen Plus) should **NOT** be used by breastfeeding mothers.

Aspirin (in analgesic doses) should **NOT** be used by breastfeeding mothers.

It is very important you inform your surgeon, anaesthetist and nurses that you are breastfeeding so they can provide you with optimal care.

Take care post procedure

You should take extra care for 24 hours after any procedure and ideally a second caregiver should be available to help look after the infant.

It is not advised to co-sleep, or sleeping while feeding infant in a chair, for 24 hours post procedure as you are likely to be more drowsy than normal.

SVHG document control

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References:

1. Mitchell, J., Jones, W., Winkley, E. and Kinsella, S.M. (2020), Guideline on anaesthesia and sedation in breastfeeding women 2020. Anaesthesia, 75: 1
2. National Maternity Hospital Post-Natal Analgesia Guideline, Document No. PP-CS-PHR-9, Rev. No.3, Review date: 11/03/2027.

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Breastfeeding and Medication for Surgery



Welcome to St. Vincent's Private Hospital.

St. Vincent's Private Hospital (SVPH) is the single, biggest acute private hospital in Dublin. We offer the highest number of consultants and the widest range of specialist care in Ireland's only integrated multi-hospital campus.

We aim to facilitate continuation of breastfeeding as much as possible. It is very important you inform your surgeon, anaesthetist and nurses that you are breastfeeding so they can provide you with optimal care.

Planning ahead

Make sure to ask your surgeon how long your procedure is likely to be and therefore how long you will be away from baby. This will allow you to pump and save sufficient milk for baby during surgery.

If you anticipate needing to express milk whilst in hospital please arrange to bring in your own pump, milk storage containers and a cooler bag.

Will I need to stop breastfeeding?

We aim to facilitate continuation of breastfeeding as much as possible.

For most of the drugs used in surgery, the amount of drug that passes into breastmilk is minimal and breastfeeding can continue as normal as soon as the woman is alert and able to feed, without the need to discard breastmilk.

For most procedures the majority of the time there will be no need to stop breastfeeding.

However if any out of the ordinary drugs are required or if some of the more sedating drugs are used—each drug should be reviewed for safety. You should check with your doctor or nurse to see what drugs will be, or have been used during your procedure.

Anaesthetic drugs. These are sedating drugs. For the majority of anaesthetic drugs that are used in SVPH the amount of drug that is transferred to breast milk is very small therefore it is safe to continue breastfeeding. Once you are alert and able to hold your baby it is fine to breastfeed.

Analgesic drugs (pain relief).

Paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are often used as pain relief peri-operatively — it is safe to continue breastfeeding after these drugs.

Stronger analgesic drugs (opioids) can be sedating, therefore they must be used with caution especially in babies up to 6 weeks old. The amount of drug that is passed into breast milk depends on the number of doses you have had, and for how many days you have received treatment.

If you require opioid drugs during your procedure please check with your nurse or doctor whether it is safe to continue breastfeeding.

If you require opioid drugs after your procedure please check with your nurse or doctor whether it is safe to continue breastfeeding; as mentioned a maximum dose per day and duration is advised when breastfeeding.

Sedating drugs. Benzodiazepines also need to be used with caution. They can be sedating especially in babies up to 6 weeks and if given in multiple doses.

If you have received opioids or benzodiazepines and are advised to continue breastfeeding it would be prudent to monitor your baby for any signs of drowsiness or difficulty breathing and if concerned stop medication (if still taking); pause breastfeeding and seek medical attention.

However, usually, if used at low doses for the shortest possible time breastfeeding can continue as normal with minimal effect on either mother or baby.