

Contraindications to breastfeeding

FACTSHEET
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Breastfeeding may not be in the best interest of the baby in the following conditions:

- The baby has galactosaemia,
- Mother has active untreated tuberculosis, T-cell lymphotropic virus type 1 or 11,
- Mother is receiving diagnostic or therapeutic radioactive isotopes or has had exposure to radioactive materials,
- Mother is receiving antimetabolites or other chemotherapeutic agents,
- Mother is abusing drugs,
- Mother has herpes simplex lesions on a breast (the baby may feed from the other breast if free from lesions),
- Mother is HIV positive.

The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the risks in the following conditions:

- Mother is Hepatitis B surface antigen positive,
- Mother is infected with Hepatitis C virus,
- Mother is carrier of cytomegalovirus (except for possibly very low birth weight babies),
- Mother smokes – advise her to give up smoking and not smoke in the home,
- Mother consumes alcoholic beverages – advise her that an occasional small amount of alcohol will not harm baby but to avoid breastfeeding for approximately two hours after drinking,
- Baby born with jaundice and hyperbilirubinaemia – should for the most part be breastfed without interruption. Occasionally, in rare cases of hyperbilirubinaemia breastfeeding may need to be interrupted temporarily.

Reference

Breastfeeding and use of human milk. Paediatrics. VOI 115 No. 2 Feb 2005.