



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Getting Ready for Your Surgery or Procedure While You're Breastfeeding or Lactating

This information will help you get ready for your surgery or procedure at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) while you're breastfeeding or lactating (when your body makes milk).

Before Your Surgery or Procedure

Ask about your medications

- Talk with your healthcare team about the different types of medication that you will get before, during, and after your surgery or procedure. By talking with them ahead of time, they can support you throughout your care.
- Let your child's pediatrician know that you'll be having a procedure for which you may need anesthesia (medication to make you sleep) or other medications.

If you have questions about any of the medications you'll get, there are resources that can help:

- Infant Risk Center

www.infantrisk.com

806-352-2519

You can find information on the use of medications during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

- TOXNET Drugs and Lactation Database (LactMed)

www.toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm

You can find information about medication and other chemicals that can be passed on to your infant from breast milk.

Pump and store your breast milk

- If possible, pump and store a supply of breast milk before your surgery or procedure. Storing your breast milk ahead of time will help make sure your baby drinks your breast milk even when you aren't together.
- If you expect to stay in the hospital for more than 24 hours (1 day), plan to have a family member or friend bring your pumped breast milk home each day.
 - Your breast milk can be stored in an insulated cooler bag with ice packs for 24 hours. Keep the ice packs in contact with the milk containers at all times. Open the cooler bag as little as possible to help the milk stay cold.
 - Once your friend or family member brings your milk home, your milk should be used right away, stored in the refrigerator, or frozen.
 - If you can't send your milk home each day, you can store it at one of these MSK locations:
 - **Memorial Hospital (MSK's main hospital)**
1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
New York, NY 10065
 - **David H. Koch Center for Cancer Care**
530 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021
 - **Josie Robertson Surgery Center**
1133 York Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Breast milk may be stored on site for up to 4 days.

For more information about how to safely store your breast milk, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at

The Day of Your Surgery or Procedure

Plan to breastfeed or pump right before your surgery or procedure. This will help maintain your milk supply and prevent pain and breast engorgement (when your breasts overflow with milk and become firm and swollen).

What to bring to your surgery or procedure

- Your own breast pump with its power source.
- All the supplies you need for milk expression (removing milk from your breasts).
- Milk storage containers.
- A cooler bag with ice packs to store your pumped breast milk.

Your breast pump will be inspected for safety by our biomed technician. Usually, this can be done at the bedside, but they may need to take the pump away for a moment to inspect it.

If your personal breast pump stops working or fails the inspection, there are some hospital breast pumps available for you to use at the following MSK locations:

- **Memorial Hospital (MSK's main hospital)**
1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
New York, NY 10065
- **David H. Koch Center for Cancer Care**
530 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021
- **Josie Robertson Surgery Center**
1133 York Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Talk with your healthcare team

On the day of your surgery or procedure, tell your healthcare team that you're breastfeeding or lactating and want to continue.

After Your Surgery or Procedure

Anesthesia doesn't stay in your body for very long. If you have questions about the anesthesia you received, talk with your anesthesiologist (the doctor who gives you anesthesia).

You should plan to start pumping again as soon as you're awake and able. If you need help, ask a member of your healthcare team. You may also want to ask your family or friends for help as you recover from your surgery or procedure.

While you're not with your baby, plan to pump every 3 to 4 hours, or at least as often as your baby feeds. Pumping frequently will help maintain your supply of breast milk until you're able to breastfeed again.

If you have questions about any of the medications you'll get after your surgery or procedure, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also check the websites or call the number listed under the "Before Your Surgery or Procedure" section.

Additional Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Proper Handling and Storage of Human Milk

www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm

Provides information about how to safely prepare and store breast milk.

Breastfeeding USA

www.breastfeedingusa.org

Provides information and support for breastfeeding.

International Lactation Consultant Association

www.ilca.org

888-452-2478

You can find an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC) near

you by searching under the “Find an IBCLC?” section.

United States Lactation Consultant Association

<https://uslca.org/>

You can find an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) near you by searching under the “Find an IBCLC” section.

Resources for pumping supplies near MSK

Falk Surgical Supplies

www.falksurgical.com

1167 First Avenue between East 63rd and East 64th Streets

New York, NY 10065

212-744-8080

Yummy Mummy

<https://yumyumstore.com>

1201 Lexington Avenue between East 81st and East 82nd Streets

New York, NY 10028

212-879-8669

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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