

Breastfeeding after breast surgery



the women's
the royal women's hospital

You might be able to breastfeed even if you have had breast surgery, treatment or a procedure involving your breast. We can help you understand what might happen for your breastfeeding and what you can do.

Tell us if you had surgery

You can talk to your midwife or doctor when you are pregnant so we know you had breast surgery. We can help you find out how your surgery might affect your breastfeeding. The surgery might have changed how much milk can get to your baby.

We will look at your breasts to see where you have any scars. We will ask you some questions, like:

- what are your plans for breastfeeding?
- when did you have your surgery? Were there any complications?
- has feeling in your breasts and nipples changed since your surgery?
- have you done any breastfeeding since your surgery? How did that go?

You can probably do some breastfeeding that you and your baby will benefit from and enjoy, regardless of the procedure, treatment or surgery you had.

We will help find a way that works for you.

Have you had breast enlargement surgery?

Breast enlargement is when you have implants put into one or both of your breasts to make them bigger.

If the surgery cut was under your breast

You will probably be okay to breastfeed without any issues.

If the surgery cut was next to your areola

The areola is the darker skin near your nipple. It might affect your breastfeeding because the surgery could have affected your milk ducts.

If you had breast reconstruction

You might have had surgery because of an accident or because of how your breast grew. It might affect your breastfeeding.

Have you had breast reduction surgery?

Breast reduction is when you have some breast tissue removed to make your breasts smaller. It is likely to affect your breastfeeding, but it is different for everyone.

You might also find if you had your nipple and areola moved during the surgery it will probably affect your breastfeeding.

Inverted nipple procedure

This might affect your breastfeeding

Breast lump removal

You will probably be okay to breastfeed without any issues.

Breast cancer treatment

It is not recommended to breastfeed from your breast that had radiotherapy. But you can usually breastfeed from your other breast.

Nipple piercing

You will probably be okay to breastfeed.

We can help

It might feel hard, but we can help. Talk to your midwife, doctor or lactation consultant.

Soon after birth

You will need support to:

- start breastfeeding within an hour of birth
- breastfeed frequently, at least 8 times in every 24 hours.

Having skin-to-skin contact with your baby will help you start breastfeeding. Your breasts will start making milk after the birth of your baby regardless of your surgery.

We will explain what you need to do to look after your breasts.

Is your baby getting enough milk?

It is important to check how much milk is getting through to your baby. Your midwife, doctor or lactation consultant will need to check your baby has enough wet and dirty nappies and is gaining weight. They will talk to you if there are any concerns.

You might be able to breastfeed from only one breast if needed. Your midwife, doctor or lactation consultant will talk to you about whether you need to use a combination of breastfeeding and infant formula.

For more information and help

You might want to ask for ongoing support from a lactation consultant or the Australian Breastfeeding Association when you are breastfeeding. You can talk to:

Your local Maternal and Child Health Nurse

Maternal & Child Health Line

You can call any time of day or night.
13 22 29

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Breastfeeding Helpline
1800 686 268
breastfeeding.asn.au

Lactation Consultants of Australia and New Zealand

lcanz.org

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

Support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.
1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.