

Breastfeeding and Medication



Cystitis and Breastfeeding

Cystitis is defined as a urinary tract infection (UTI) that affects the bladder. It's common, particularly in women. It often gets better by itself, but may sometimes be treated with antibiotics. Some people get cystitis frequently and may need regular or long-term treatment.

Early symptoms of cystitis can be treated by drinking lots of watery liquids and the use of over the counter remedies containing sodium citrate (Effercitrate, . This does not pass into breastmilk but just makes the urine more alkaline and less attractive to the bacteria causing the infection. Sodium citrate is added to formula milk.

Symptoms of cystitis include:

- pain, burning or stinging when you pass urine
- needing to wee more often and urgently than usual
- urine that's dark, cloudy or strong smelling
- pain low down in your abdomen

Treatment of cystitis

- Drink lots of watery drinks until your urine becomes pale in colour although the instinct is not to drink as much to avoid having to wee and the associated pain which can be enough to make you want to cry.
- Try over the counter remedies which alter the pH of the urine to discourage the growth of the bacteria.
- If symptoms don't improve or the pain moves up to your kidney area with the passing of blood seek medical attention as soon as possible. Most pharmacies now offer a walk in service.

Medication for cystitis

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www.breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk

September 2023 *The information on this sheet is based upon my professional experience as a pharmacist with a specialised interest in the safety of drugs in breastmilk, supported by evidence from expert sources. However, I cannot take responsibility for the prescription of medication which remains with the healthcare professionals involved. I am happy to discuss the evidence by email wendy@breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk*

- Over the counter remedies usually contain sodium or potassium citrate e.g. Cystopurin, Effercitrate, CanesOasis, Own Brands. These are all compatible with breastfeeding <https://www.e-lactancia.org/breastfeeding/sodium-citrate/product/>
- Prescribed medication may depend on the results of the results of your urine sample to identify which anti-biotic the bacteria would be sensitive to and indeed whether an infection is present or absent. These include Trimethoprim, Amoxicillin, Nitrofurantoin, These are all compatible with breastfeeding <https://breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk/fact-sheet/antibiotics-and-breastfeeding>
- Repeated UTI may need long term antibiotic but are often related to vaginal dryness due to perimenopause and sexual intercourse. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cystitis/>
- Some women find that cranberry juice is useful and is compatible with breastfeeding although the evidence base of efficacy is poor
- A frequently asked question is about the use of D-mannose as a supplement. There is no research on the amount passing into milk. The risk appears low according to <https://www.e-lactancia.org/breastfeeding/mannose-d-mannose/product/>

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