



Anesthesia and the New Mom

(NAPSA)—There could be good news for new mothers—and their babies—at what might be an anxious time.

Many mothers agree that there are myriad benefits associated with breastfeeding an infant. When the mother is faced with surgery, however, she may question whether the breastfeeding should stop. In addition to the logistical difficulty of breastfeeding when a new mother is admitted to the hospital, there may be concerns about the medications the mother could receive.

According to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), most anesthetic drugs are safe for use during lactation, and typically only 1 to 2 percent of such medications given to the mother appear in breast milk—not enough to harm a baby.

“Many studies have found that the use of general anesthesia and most commonly used medications for pain relief are safe and should not interfere with breastfeeding because only minimal traces of the anesthetic are passed on through the breast milk,” said AANA President Janice Izlar, CRNA, DNAP. “A nursing mother should be allowed to breastfeed as soon as she is awake and aware after general anesthesia.”

More Information About Breastfeeding and Anesthesia

- Most medications used in general anesthesia do not remain in the mother’s system and do not affect her milk.
- Pain suppresses lactation. Proper pain relief will help lactation continue.
- Nearly all pain medications are safe for the nursing mother. Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) and ibuprofen (such as Advil) are



New mothers facing surgery may be relieved by a few facts about anesthesia.

safe. Narcotic analgesics should be used with greater caution, but in general only very small amounts appear in breast milk. Morphine has been shown to have the least effect of all narcotics on infants. Codeine should be used with caution but other medications are easily substituted for it. Demerol may cause some drowsiness in an infant but is generally considered safe.

New moms who need anesthesia for surgery or another procedure should always consult an anesthesia professional about their specific situation. There are exceptions to every rule and there may be other considerations to think about. Deciding whether to continue breastfeeding is about weighing both the risks and the benefits after receiving proper guidance.

Learn More

As advanced practice registered nurses, certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) are anesthesia professionals who safely administer more than 33 million anesthetics to patients each year in the United States.

You can find further facts at www.aana.com.