

Feeling anxious and Breastfeeding

The information provided is taken from various reference sources. It is provided as a guideline. No responsibility can be taken by the author or the Breastfeeding Network for the way in which the information is used. Clinical decisions remain the responsibility of medical and breastfeeding practitioners. The data presented here is intended to provide some immediate information but cannot replace input from professionals.

You can take medication for anxiety and continue to breastfeed without harming your baby.

There are many reasons that we become anxious at one point or another in our lives. Anxiety is a normal and healthy emotion. 1 in 10 of us will experience a significant anxiety disorder at some point in our lives although this increases during pregnancy and the year after giving birth.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling or dread or fear about a real or imagined situation. It is often characterised by excessively worrying and focusing on thoughts and situations that scare or upset you and is accompanied by a range of physical sensations. We will often notice changes in three areas, our thoughts, our physical feelings and our behaviours. If you find that you are anxious most of the day, several days a week for more than 2-3 weeks then this can be signs that anxiety is becoming more of a problem for you. If it is impacting on your ability to continue your normal life then you may wish to seek further help from your GP or other voluntary services.

Treatment

Your GP may refer you for CBT or you may be able to self-refer. There may be a waiting period before assessment and before treatment can begin but you have made the first step by acknowledging how you feel. You may be prescribed medication. This may include propranolol and SSRI antidepressants. It may be that you are given tri-cyclic antidepressants or very short term benzodiazepines such as diazepam or lorazepam.

For further information please check out the more detailed information www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/anxiety.

If anyone tells you that you have to stop breastfeeding in order to take a medication please contact the Drugs in Breastmilk Helpline via facebook www.facebook.com/BfNDrugsinBreastmilkinformation or email (drug-information@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) and we will discuss this with you and help you find information based on research.

To talk to a mum who knows about breastfeeding call the National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212

Calls to 0300 numbers cost no more than calls to UK numbers starting 01 and 02 and will be part of any inclusive minutes that apply to your provider and call package.