

The Effects of Caffeine on Lactation¹

Ashley Orynich and Linda Bobroff²

Transcribed from the Family Album Radio Program, a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at familyalbumradio.org

Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.



Credits: iStockphoto

Human milk is the preferred food for infants, with exceptional physiological benefits not only for the baby but for the mother as well. Mothers need to be aware, though, that many substances that they consume are excreted in breast milk and can profoundly affect the composition and adequacy of her breastmilk. Even caffeine, which many of us consume on a daily basis in our coffee, tea, cola drinks and chocolate, finds its way into breast milk.

There is much debate over how much caffeine may safely be consumed by breastfeeding moms. Most physicians believe that moderate intake causes no problems for lactating mothers or their babies, but that complications may arise when caffeine is consumed in excess (Brown, J., 2004). Because infants cannot metabolize caffeine until the age of three to four months, large doses may accumulate in very young breastfed infants.

An interesting study by the American College of Nutrition in 1994, demonstrated the consequences of chronic maternal consumption of coffee during lactation in rats. High doses of caffeine resulted in long-term effects on sleep, learning abilities, anxiety, and mobility. Such high doses are never encountered in humans, and more studies are necessary to determine the consequences of early caffeine consumption on behavior (Nehlig, A & Debry G. 1994). According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a cup of coffee or tea in the morning isn't likely to harm a nursing baby. However, pregnant or breastfeeding mothers should consider drinking mostly decaffeinated beverages for their babies' health.

1. This document is FAR0423, one of a series of the Family Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Broadcast as program 388 in January 2007. Published on EDIS August 2012. In the interest of time and/or clarity, the broadcast version of this script may have been modified. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Ashley Orynich, student, and Linda Bobroff, associate professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

Listening, learning and living together, it's the science of life. "Family Album" is a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at <http://familyalbumradio.org>.

To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://radiosource.net/radio_stories/388.mp3

http://radiosource.net/radio_stories/388.wav

References

Brown, J.E.(2004). *Nutrition Through the Life Cycle*. National Academy of Sciences:National Academies Press.

Consequences on the newborn of chronic maternal consumption of coffee during gestation and lactation: a review. *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*,13, 16-21.

Breastfeeding and Your Diet, The American Academy of Pediatrics, retrieved 2/7/06 from http://www.aap.org/pubed/ZZZNIUQQ7C.htm?&sub_cat=1.