



Breastfeeding Mom Opens up About Being Shamed by a Relative for Drinking Coffee



by Korin Miller

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Getty Images

A new mom on Reddit recently shared her frustration with a relative who criticized her for drinking a second cup of Joe. Is it okay to consume caffeine while breastfeeding? Here's what experts say.

It can be tricky to find enough energy to get everything done when you're a new mom — and for many parents, that's where coffee comes into play.

Unfortunately, pregnant women aren't the only ones being shamed for drinking coffee. Reddit user Kurlsandpearls recently shared her frustration with a relative who criticized her for drinking coffee while breastfeeding her 2-month old son.

"I'm 22 and overworked and tired and have a pile of homework and assignments to do," she wrote, explaining that her morning coffee has been helping her get everything done.

Kurlsandpearls said that her step-grandmother chastised her for drinking coffee to stay energized. "Didn't I tell you yesterday that too much caffeine is bad for the baby?" she said her step-grandmother told her.

When the new mom fired back, "she apologized for being too pushy and said she would mind her business, and I said that it sounded like a good idea," Kurlsandpearls wrote.

Most moms know that [drinking coffee while pregnant](#) is considered fine in moderation, but the recommendations can be a little less clear when you're breastfeeding.

Is it okay to have coffee while you're breastfeeding?

Some good news for sleep-deprived new moms: It's [safe to consume coffee](#) and other forms of caffeine while breastfeeding.

While traces of caffeine have been found in breast milk, the amount that's passed along to your baby is usually too small to have any negative effects, says lactation consultant Joan Younger Meek, M.D., a professor of clinical sciences at Florida State University College of Medicine.

Generally, 200 and 300 mg of caffeine a day is considered fine for breastfeeding moms, which ends up being two small cups of coffee or one 12-ounce cup a day.

But, of course, every baby is different. If your baby is premature or less than 4 weeks old, she might be more sensitive to caffeine. "It can take those babies longer to metabolize the caffeine that they receive from Mom's milk," Dr. Meek explains.

A good way to tell if your baby is being negatively impacted by your coffee habit is to check for symptoms. If your little one seems fussy, jittery or doesn't sleep well after you have caffeine, Dr. Meek says it might be a good idea to scale back on how much coffee you're drinking, or to consider switching to decaf.

"Your baby is going to let you know if the caffeine is bothering them," says Joanne Goldbort, Ph.D., R.N., a breastfeeding researcher and assistant professor in the College of Nursing at Michigan State University.

It's also important to keep in mind that other foods, like chocolate, tea and soda, can also contain caffeine, says Diane L. Spatz, Ph.D., a professor of perinatal nursing at the University of Pennsylvania and nurse researcher at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

If you're particularly worried about how coffee might impact your baby, Dr. Meek points out that the caffeine tends to peak in your milk about an hour after you drink coffee. As a result, you might want to time your coffee intake so that you enjoy a cup of Joe right *after* you nurse or pump. That way, the caffeine will have time to work its way out of your system by the time baby is hungry again.

The bottom line? Experts agree that breastfeeding moms shouldn't feel bad about having a second cup of coffee.

"Caffeine in moderation is okay!" Dr. Spatz says. "And it makes parents who are sleep-deprived happy."



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Korin Miller is a freelance writer specializing in general wellness, parenting, women's health and lifestyle trends, with work appearing in Prevention, Women's Health, Self, Glamour and more. She has a master's degree from American University, lives by the beach with her three kids and husband and hopes to own a pig one day.