

## People Are Wondering If Beyoncé Is Drinking While Breastfeeding, as If That's Any of Their Business

Calm down, everyone.



Instagram / @beyonce

**Beyoncé fans** don't miss a thing, so when the pop star and new mom recently posted a photo on **Instagram** they quickly questioned why she was drinking while breastfeeding. In the photo, the new mom to Rumi and Sir is sipping what appears to be a glass of wine, and people had a lot of feelings about that.

“But how can you drink if you breastfeed? Let's hope it's iced tea,” one person wrote in the comments. “People don't know if she pumped before she went out and can have a drink or two while feeding,” another said. “If she is nursing the babies, wine ain't good,” someone else wrote.

First of all, breastfeeding is a personal decision and not necessarily possible for every new mom. Second of all, it's all but impossible to know whether or not Beyoncé is nursing her twins—nor is it anyone's business. But the question of drinking while nursing comes up a lot, and most people automatically assume it's a bad idea.



## But while drinking during pregnancy is widely discouraged, the recommendations around drinking while breastfeeding are a little less stringent.

It's true that alcohol can pass through breast milk to a baby, according to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), which is why they say that it's best for women to avoid "habitual use" of alcohol while breastfeeding. "There are concerns about long-term, repeated exposures of infants to alcohol via mother's milk, so moderation is definitely advised," the AAP says. (For the record, the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) defines "moderate" drinking as having up to one drink a day for women, which is equivalent to a 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard alcohol.)

But as SELF previously reported, the actual amount of alcohol that can pass through your breast milk to your baby is very low. Alcohol enters your blood quickly after you drink and goes into your breastmilk, Maija Bruun Haastrup, M.D., a researcher in the Department of Clinical Biochemistry and Pharmacology at Denmark's Odense University Hospital, tells SELF. But just like your blood alcohol level decreases over time as your body metabolizes alcohol, the same is true for the concentration of alcohol in your milk. "When there is no more alcohol in the blood stream, there is no more alcohol in the milk," Dr. Haastrup says.

Some older studies have linked drinking alcohol and **nursing** with poor sleep in infants, including one published in the journal *Pediatrics*. But a more recent meta-analysis from Dr. Haastrup published in the journal *Basic & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology*, found that “occasional drinking while breastfeeding has not been convincingly shown to adversely affect nursing infants.” Researchers found that any type of alcohol was fine, provided new moms drank it in moderation. “We...found that overall there is no solid evidence that alcohol exposure through the breast milk can affect infants adversely,” Dr. Haastrup says.

While a little alcohol in your breast milk won't get your baby drunk, it will take them longer to metabolize that alcohol than an adult (obviously). “If the baby ingests alcohol in the milk, it takes longer for the baby to break down and eliminate the alcohol than it would for the mother's system,” international board-certified lactation consultant Joan Younger Meek, M.D., R.D., chairwoman of the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding and associate dean for Graduate Medical Education at Florida State University College of Medicine, tells SELF. And that alcohol may cause sedation or increased sleepiness in the baby, she says.

There's also **research suggesting** that drinking alcohol can temporarily decrease milk production by inhibiting the milk ejection reflex. Consuming alcohol may also change the taste of breast milk and turn some babies off from the practice, according to the AAP.

## Overall, you're probably OK to have a drink here and there, but there are a few things to keep in mind.

“It is acceptable to have the occasional alcoholic beverage while breastfeeding,” 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, tells SELF. However, she adds, if you're feeling tipsy, drunk, or woozy, you shouldn't be caring for your baby or breastfeeding.

If you know you're going to have a drink, Dr. Spatz recommends nursing your baby first or pumping and then having a drink. “If you are only having one, by the time you are due to breastfeed your baby again, the alcohol will be out of your system,” she says.

If you know you're going to have a night out and will probably have more than one drink, leave pumped milk for whoever is watching the baby, nurse the baby or pump before you go out, and then wait to nurse your baby until you're no longer feeling the impact of alcohol. If you feel tipsy and your boobs are ready to burst, it's best to pump and dump, Dr. Meek says. “In general, however, ‘pumping and dumping’ is not recommended with mild alcohol ingestion,” she adds. Dr. Haastrup agrees. “Pumping and dumping has no effect on the concentration of alcohol in the milk,” she says—you would only do it to relieve the pressure in your breasts. (BTW, you may have seen little strips you can use to test the alcohol level in your milk, but Dr. Meek says they haven't been supported by good research.)

Overall, Dr. Spatz says that moderation is key—and, given it can be exhausting to take care of an infant and you probably just came off of nine months of sobriety, that's probably all you're going to want anyway.