



BCG Vaccine

Revised: August 15, 2022.

Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and several health professional organizations state that vaccines given to a nursing mother do not affect the safety of breastfeeding for mothers or infants and that breastfeeding is not a contraindication to the BCG vaccine. Breastfed infants should be vaccinated according to the routine recommended schedules.[1-3] Bladder installation of BCG vaccine is acceptable, but pre-treatment BCG vaccination of the infant may be advisable.

Drug Levels

Maternal Levels. Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Infant Levels. Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Effects in Breastfed Infants

In one study, breastfeeding improved the cellular immune response to BCG vaccine if the vaccine was given at birth. However, if the vaccine was given at 1 month of age, breastfeeding had no effect.[4]

A nursing mother presented with bladder carcinoma 2 months postpartum. After deciding to treat her with intravesicular BCG vaccine, her infant was given the BCG vaccine subcutaneously 2 weeks before the mother's first treatment. The mother continued to breastfeed her infant throughout 6 courses of induction therapy and the initial 3 weekly maintenance treatments. The infant had no reported adverse effects, such as systemic dissemination of BCG.[5]

Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

Relevant published information was not found as of the revision date.

Disclaimer: Information presented in this database is not meant as a substitute for professional judgment. You should consult your healthcare provider for breastfeeding advice related to your particular situation. The U.S. government does not warrant or assume any liability or responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information on this Site.

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References

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2. Kimberlin DW, Brady MT, Jackson MA, et al. Red Book: 2018 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 31st ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics. 2018.
3. Gruslin A, Steben M, Halperin S, et al. Immunization in pregnancy: No. 220, December 2008. *Int J Gynaecol Obstet.* 2009;105:187–91. PubMed PMID: 19367691.
4. Pabst HF, Godel J, Grace M, et al. Effect of breast-feeding on immune response to BCG vaccine. *Lancet.* 1989;1:295–7. PubMed PMID: 2563456.
5. Barbur E, Doganca T, Obek C. Safe use of intravesical bacillus Calmette-Guérin immunotherapy for bladder cancer during breastfeeding: A case report. *Immunotherapy.* 2022;14:759–64. PubMed PMID: 35754395.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

BCG Vaccine

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Milk, Human

Vaccines