



Breastfeeding and Day Surgery

This information sheet is being provided to you because you are currently breast/chest feeding and scheduled for a day surgery operation at the Grey Nuns Hospital (GNH)

GNH is a breastfeeding friendly environment and it is our goal to support your breast/chest feeding goals. We recognize that going for surgery while breast/chest feeding can add extra stress. We hope the information below may help you and your family to feel more prepared. Breast/Chest feeding is a supply and demand relationship; your milk supply is maintained by frequent milk removed by your baby during feedings. Going to the operating room will mean that you and your baby are temporarily separated. To minimize feeding delays caused by this separation and to improve your comfort, we encourage one of the two following options:

1. Bring your baby to the day surgery unit so that you can feed them before going to the operating room.
 - If you choose this option, you must have another person 16 years of age or older to take care of your baby while you are in surgery.
 - GNH staff are not able to care for your baby during your surgery.

OR

2. Bring a breast pump and a cooler bag to the day surgery unit so that you may pump and store your milk as needed and as close as possible to the time before you are taken to the operating room.
 - If you do not have a breast pump, please let the nursing team know and we will do our best to provide you with one during your stay in hospital.
 - If you are not able to bring a cooler bag with you, your milk can be stored in the day surgery unit fridge.

If you choose option 2, it is important to have enough milk or food supply at home to last several hours.

- Once you know the date of your surgery, you can start pumping and freezing your milk to build up an extra supply that can be fed to your baby during your absence.
- If you are not able to build up a supply and depending on the age of your baby, you may need to plan to supplement with formula or other foods you feel are appropriate during your absence.

We recognize that staying hydrated might be a bit difficult as you prepare for your operation.

- Please try to drink plenty of fluids the day before your surgery
- **Follow the pre-operative fasting instructions from the booking office**

Your surgery might be very short, but the overall stay in hospital may be longer due to:

- Time needed to prepare you for the operating room
- Anesthetic recovery time
- Unanticipated delays



If your baby is healthy and was born at term, it is most often safe for you to feed your baby as soon as you are awake and alert enough to safely hold your baby. If you have questions, please discuss this with your anesthesiologist and surgery team on the day of your procedure. There is also a separate information sheet with advice about breastfeeding and pain management options for after surgery that you will be given before discharge. Thank you for taking the time to read this resource. If you are interested in resources related to anesthesia and breastfeeding please visit the below link or speak with your healthcare team.

Le Leche League Canada: Surgery, Anesthesia and Medications while Breastfeeding
<https://www.lllc.ca/surgery-anesthesia-and-medications-while-breastfeeding>

Patient Information

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