Radiocontrast media and breastfeeding

X-rays, MRIs, CAT scans, Intravenous Pyelogram (IVP), ultrasound, mammograms, etc. do not affect breastfeeding. Barium is sometimes used as a contrast agent; it is not absorbed orally and thus does not affect breastfeeding.

Sometimes radiocontrast dyes are used to aid the imaging - these dyes do not require that mom interrupt breastfeeding.

"Although most package inserts for these products suggest that nursing mothers postpone breastfeeding their babies for 24 hours after use, research indicates that this is not necessary (Kubik-Huch 2000; Rofsky 1993; Nielson 1987; Fitz-John 1982). In Medications and Mothers' Milk (2002), Dr. Thomas Hale explains that 'Although under usual circumstances iodine products are contraindicated in nursing mothers (due to ion trapping in milk), these products are unique in that they are extremely inert and do not release free iodine... They are virtually unabsorbed after oral administration' (Hale, p. 480). In mothers who have used these agents while breastfeeding, no effects have been reported in their nursing babies (Kubik-Huch 2000; Nielson 1987). These preparations are also used in children for diagnostic purposes."


"Because of the very small percentage of iodinated contrast medium that is excreted into the breast milk and absorbed by the infant's gut, we believe that the available data suggest that it is safe for the mother and infant to continue breastfeeding after receiving such an agent... Review of the literature shows no evidence to suggest that oral ingestion by an infant of the tiny amount of gadolinium contrast agent excreted into breast milk would cause toxic effects. We believe, therefore, that the available data suggest that it is safe for the mother and infant to continue breastfeeding after receiving such an agent."


"Contrast medium is not appreciably deionated. In addition, the absorption of hydrophilic contrast medium is minimal when it is given orally for imaging studies of the gastrointestinal tract. Since no toxicity is known in full-term infants even after the direct administration of contrast medium, the use of these compounds by breastfeeding women appear to pose no risk to their infants."


### Contrast dyes & radiopaque agents approved by the AAP for use in breastfeeding mothers *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic name</th>
<th>Trade Name</th>
<th>Pregnancy Risk Category**</th>
<th>Lactation Risk Category**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diatrizoate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluorescein</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>L3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadopentetic (Gadolinium)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iohexol</td>
<td>Omnipaque</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iopanoic acid</td>
<td>Telepaque</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrizamide</td>
<td>Amipaque</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrizoate</td>
<td>Isopaque</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Lactation Risk Categories

- **L1** (safest)
- **L2** (safer)
- **L3** (moderately safe)
- **L4** (possibly hazardous)
- **L5** (contraindicated)

### Pregnancy Risk Categories

- A (controlled studies show no risk)
- B (no evidence of risk in humans)
- C (risk cannot be ruled out)
- D (positive evidence of risk)
- X (contraindicated in pregnancy)

NR: Not Reviewed. This drug has not yet been reviewed by Hale.

### References: