



## Tips on Breastfeeding During the Holidays

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During the holiday season, new mothers run extra errands, attend more celebrations, and travel to visit friends and relatives, just like everyone else. However, these activities can change daily breastfeeding routines. For example, babies might nap longer during travel times and sleep less at night. Loving relatives and friends may cherish the opportunity to hold and give bottles to the baby, leading to fewer opportunities to breastfeed. Here is some advice:

- **Mom Needs Rest**

Mom should recognize that she can't do everything! Having a new baby and breastfeeding are great reasons to kick back and limit activities. Mom can tell relatives that 'my lactation consultant said'... that she needs to rest, stay home, and avoid excessive travel.

- **Tips on Travel**

It is best to avoid 'red-eye' travel, which might seem more convenient because the baby sleeps more at night. However, mom is not likely to sleep well during the travel time, setting her up for daytime exhaustion, mastitis, lower supply and plugged ducts. Planning extra time for travel in order for mom to take breaks for breastfeeding, rest, and proper nutrition is ideal.

- **Encourage Mom to Stay in Her Normal Infant Feeding Routine**

Breastfeeding is a short episode in mom's life. Focusing on the baby and breastfeeding helps to protect her supply and keeps her infant healthy, especially during these times of extra germ exposures from relatives and friends.

- **Mom Needs Healthy Meals and Plenty of Fluids**

The stress of the holidays and sharing of holiday treats can lead to snacking on empty calories. Mom will feel her best if she has balanced meals daily.

- **Watch Out for the Herbs that can Reduce Milk Supply**

Many holiday foods are flavored with sage, peppermint oil and parsley. These can decrease the supply if taken in excess.

- **Maternal and Child Illness**

When Mom is not feeling well, she may find her supply decreases. When infants and toddlers are ill, they may breastfeed less frequently, which also can lead to engorgement, plugs, mastitis and a drop in supply. When possible, rest and nap while the child is napping, and pump if necessary to protect the supply until typical feedings resume.

Mothers need to be aware of how common over-the-counter medications taken during cold and flu season can affect their supply. Consider reviewing our handout "Over the Counter Medications While Breastfeeding". It's important to avoid decongestants such as pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine when possible. Excessive use of diphenhydramine (Benadryl) can also drop the milk supply.