



Varicella Vaccine

Revised: October 31, 2018.

Drug Levels and Effects

Summary of Use during Lactation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the 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 varicella vaccine. Breastfed infants should be vaccinated according to the routine recommended schedules.[1][2][3]

Drug Levels

Maternal Levels. Two postpartum women immunized with varicella vaccine provided preimmunization and serial postimmunization breastmilk samples (number not specified). One sample of colostrum contained detectable viral DNA and B-actin by polymerase chain reaction, but all other samples were negative for these species. No varicella gene sequences were found in any of the samples.[4]

One study of 12 women vaccinated with live, attenuated varicella vaccine found no evidence of varicella virus excretion into breastmilk.[5]

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

Effects in Breastfed Infants

Limited data indicate that breastfeeding can enhance the response of the infant to certain vaccine antigens.[1][3][6]

Effects on Lactation and Breastmilk

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

References

1. General recommendations on immunization --- recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). MMWR Recomm Rep. 2011;60 (RR-2):1-64. PubMed PMID: 21293327.
2. 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.

3. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases, Kimberlin DW, Brady MT et al. Red Book: 2015 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 30th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics. 2015.
4. Dolbear GL, Moffat J, Falkner C, Wojtowycz M. A pilot study: Is attenuated varicella virus present in breast milk after postpartum immunization? *Obstet Gynecol.* 2003;101 (4 Suppl):47s. Abstract.
5. Bohlke K, Galil K, Jackson LA et al. Postpartum varicella vaccination: is the vaccine virus excreted in breast milk? *Obstet Gynecol.* 2003;102:970-7. PubMed PMID: 14672472.
6. Pabst HF. Immunomodulation by breast-feeding. *Pediatr Infect Dis J.* 1997;16:991-5. PubMed PMID: 9380478.

Substance Identification

Substance Name

Varicella Vaccine

Drug Class

Breast Feeding

Lactation

Vaccines