



The Royal College of Midwives
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The Royal College of Midwives' response to an invitation by the Association of Anaesthetists to comment on Anaesthesia and sedation in breastfeeding women

The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) is the trade union and professional organisation that represents the vast majority of practising midwives in the UK. It is the only such organisation run by midwives for midwives. The RCM is the voice of midwifery, providing excellence in representation, professional leadership, education and influence for and on behalf of midwives. We actively support and campaign for improvements to maternity services and provide professional leadership for one of the most established clinical disciplines.

The RCM welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and our views are set out below.

These guidelines bring valuable clarity to the issues around anaesthesia and sedation in breastfeeding women. Evidence based advice on the safety of breastmilk after anaesthesia will help to ensure that health professionals give consistent messages, reassure mothers appropriately and avoid unnecessary disruption to milk supply and normal routines. The positive, sensitive and supportive tone of this document is particularly welcome.

However, with the associated risks of Sudden Infant Death and co-sleeping, Point 7 could be strengthened, to reflect NHS safety guidance:

'It's especially important not to share a bed with your baby if you or your partner:

- Have taken medication or drugs that make you sleep more heavily
- Never sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair'

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/reducing-risk-cot-death>

It may be worthwhile including a link to the Lullaby Trust, where comprehensive advice may be found on safe sleeping.

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice>

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August 2019