

# Are the benefits of breast milk stimulant worth the risk?

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Most women can make all the milk their baby needs, but some mothers turn to medications to help increase their supply. While some specialists encourage the off-label use of domperidone to stimulate breast milk production, some studies have suggested it may be related to negative side effects, including irregular heartbeat and sudden cardiac death. In a new article out today, researchers concluded that although domperidone can increase breast milk production, and there is no known risk to the babies who drink the milk, risks to women are still worrying.

This review article was published today in *Journal of Human Lactation*.

In order to assess the efficiency and safety of domperidone, researchers Catherine Paul et al. analyzed both the limited studies available on maternal and infant exposure to the stimulant as well as larger studies focused on its use in gastrointestinal disorder treatment. The researchers found the following for those exposed to the drug:

- No adverse effects were observed in a limited sample of 85 infants and 60 treated mothers
- Breast milk production moderately improved after 3 daily dosages of 10-20 mg; however some institutions suggest doses as high as 120 or 160 mg.
- It increased the odds ratio for [sudden cardiac death](#) inpatients using more than 30 mg daily

As some women are highly susceptible to certain heart diseases, the

researchers claimed the use of domperidone was especially worrisome: "In these circumstances, an improvement of breastfeeding practices seems to be more effective and safer than the use of an off-label domperidone treatment."

**More information:** "Use of Domperidone as a Galactagogue Drug: A Systematic Review of the Benefit-Risk Ratio," *Journal of Human Lactation*, 2014.

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