

# Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

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## **Comment on Fox News' "*Breastfeeding While Intoxicated –is it okay to breastfeed after having a drink?*"**

**Broadcast Sunday, June 28, 2009**

Dr. Svetlana Kogan advises that even minimal consumption of alcohol by a breastfeeding mother can have serious adverse effects on her infant, including liver and brain damage. She recommends that a mother wait a full day after consuming any alcoholic beverages before breastfeeding her infant.

Dr. Kogan's recommendations are at variance with those of virtually every medical authority in the United States. Alcohol is eliminated within two hours of consumption, and what little remains poses a negligible threat to the breastfeeding infant (McAfee G. *Drugs of Abuse and Breastfeeding in Textbook of Human Lactation* first edition. Amarillo, Texas: Hale Publishing, 2007). Although Dr. Kogan feels that the American Academy of Pediatrics is making some kind of "political statement" by advising a mother to wait two hours after consuming an alcoholic beverage before nursing her infant, similar recommendations have also been made by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Institute of Medicine. One of the foremost authorities on lactation and drugs, Dr. Thomas Hale, likewise suggests waiting two hours after alcohol consumption before breastfeeding, as does Dr. Ruth Lawrence, a pre-eminent scholar in the fields of breastfeeding medicine and toxicology.

The benefits of breastfeeding must always be measured against the risks, and in the case of the occasional drinker who breastfeeds, the risks are minimal, if they exist at all. The benefits of breastfeeding, on the other hand, are enormous, and vastly outweigh any hypothetical concerns about alcohol exposure under such circumstances. There is absolutely no proof, as Dr. Kogan suggests, that consumption of even small amounts of alcoholic beverages may have harmful effects on the infant's brain or liver.

It is unclear why the producers of Fox News chose to interview Dr. Kogan, an internist, rather than somebody with greater expertise in the field of breastfeeding. The misinformation presented in the course of this interview can only undermine the resolve of mothers to do what is best for their infants by breastfeeding them.

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