Breastfeeding moms rejoice: drinking coffee isn't going to mess up your baby's sleep

I remember spending HOURS Googling many variations of "If I drink coffee will my breastfed baby be hopped up on caffeinie?" when my son was an infant. I'm not even exaggerating -- hours and hours and hours. I was worried that my son would turn into a coffee-addicted person before his time (because face it: in our family, it's bound to happen) and convinced that his less-than-stellar sleeping skills were because I drank coffee 8 hours before I nursed him. So it would have been totally RAD if NPR had published Caffeine Might Keep Moms Awake, But Not Their Babies three years ago... but here it is for some of you who need it:

"When we planned the study, we worked with the hypothesis of association between heavy maternal consumption of caffeine and higher infant awakenings at night," Marlos Rodrigues Domingues, a researcher at Brazil's Universidade Federal de Pelotas and co-author of the study, tells Shots in an email.

It's not clear why the infants' sleep wasn't affected. The babies might have developed a tolerance to caffeine while in the womb, Rodrigues says. But other studies have found no caffeine metabolites in the urine of babies whose mothers drink coffee, suggesting that the babies don't absorb caffeine the way older children and adults do. The results were published in the journal Pediatrics.

The researchers tracked 885 babies born in 2004. All but one of the mothers consumed caffeine, either in coffee or in the herbal drink mate, which is popular in South America. And 20 percent of those women drank a lot of coffee — more than 300 mg a day of caffeine, or about six espressos.

About 14 percent of the babies awoke more than three times a night, and 41 percent woke up at least once a night. Caffeine or no, it seems likely that babies will wake up when they want to. "Night waking is common throughout the first year of life," Rodrigues says.

So moms, drink that coffee if it helps, because it doesn't seem to be harming the baby at naptime.

Don't you want to high five the hell out of these researchers... over a cup of coffee? Granted, you probably should still chat with your doctor and/or your kid's pediatrician if you have concerns, but in the meantime you can read the rest here!

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