

Key Points for Research Participants - Breastfeeding Cohort

What is Peripartum Cardiomyopathy?



Peripartum cardiomyopathy (PPCM) is a rare form of heart muscle weakness that happens between the last month of pregnancy and five months after giving birth. The heart muscle weakness results in less blood pushed out of the heart with each heartbeat. Symptoms that you may feel include shortness of breath or fatigue. With medical therapy, women with PPCM frequently recover their heart strength but many are left with a weakened heart.

The overall cause of PPCM remains unknown, but some researchers suggest that the hormone prolactin which is elevated in breastfeeding women may be involved. Bromocriptine, the drug being studied in REBIRTH, decreases prolactin and prevents breastfeeding. Women who want to breastfeed cannot be in the REBIRTH trial of bromocriptine, but they can be in the Breastfeeding study.

What is the purpose of this study?



There had been concern that breastfeeding might diminish the recovery of heart function for women with PPCM; however several small studies suggest breastfeeding is safe in women with PPCM and does not affect recovery.

The REBIRTH Breastfeeding study will examine the impact of breastfeeding on recovery of heart function for women with PPCM.

Who is being asked to be in the study?

Women with a new diagnosis of PPCM who are 18 years of age or older and are within 5 months after delivery. Women who are currently breastfeeding and plan to continue.



What would I need to do to be in the study?

- First visit: In-person approximately 1-1.5 hours
- Follow up visits: In person at 1, 3, 6 and 12 months. When possible the follow up visits will be coordinated with your routine visits. When in person visits are not possible some of these follow up visits may be handled remotely.
- Follow up visits at 24 and 36 months which can be done in person or remotely
- Duration of participation: Approximately 3 years
- Procedures during visits may include:
 - Clinical assessment of blood pressure and heart rate
 - Medical history
 - Research blood draw done at several in person visits
 - Echocardiogram or ultrasound of the heart
 - Questionnaires

