

Nutrition for Breastfeeding Moms

Congratulations on your new baby! We are glad you chose to breastfeed. Your breastmilk will help keep your baby healthy and strong. Breastfeeding is good for you, too.

As a breastfeeding mom, you may be wondering what you should eat. Keep up the good eating habits that you had during pregnancy. Your milk is the very best food for your baby even if you don't eat perfectly every day. But eating right is important for you. You need to eat well in order to feel good, have more energy and to stay healthy.

Healthy choices for mom and baby:

- Eat 5 – 6 small meals a day. Choose many different kinds of foods that you enjoy. Eat foods from each food group every day.
- New moms are busy! To save time:
 - Have water and a snack handy when you are breastfeeding.
 - Try quick and easy foods like cheese, yogurt, milk, whole-grain bread, fresh fruits, raw vegetables, hard-boiled eggs and nuts.
 - Make one-dish meals like casseroles and soups.
 - Cook enough so you have leftovers. Refrigerate or freeze in single servings for future meals.
- Limit caffeine, especially when your infant is very young. Coffee, tea, many soda pops and some medications have caffeine.
- Drink plenty of water, at least 6 – 8 glasses daily.
- Fish is a great source of protein. However, some fish may contain contaminants that could harm you and your baby. Ask the WIC staff for more information about fish.
- Get plenty of rest. Sleep while your baby naps.
- Continue to take your prenatal vitamins.
- Check with your doctor before taking any medications, even over-the-counter medications. Stay away from all street drugs.
- Limit alcohol, it does pass into the breastmilk. If you do have a drink now and then (1 or 2 a week), wait 2 hours per drink before breastfeeding.



Breastfeeding - Card 6



Healthy choices for mom and baby (continued):

- For your health and baby's health, quit or cut back on smoking. Breastmilk is the best food for your baby, even if you smoke.
- See your doctor for your postpartum checkup.

Breastfeeding doesn't have to change the way you eat. Most breastfeeding mothers can eat anything they like without bothering their babies. The taste of breastmilk changes with the foods you eat. Babies like variety just like you do! If you think a food you ate made your baby fussy, stop eating the food for a few days.

Eating right and breastfeeding will help you lose weight in a healthy way. Aim for a slow, steady weight loss. Don't skip meals or go on "quick weight loss diets". Be active! Ask your doctor when you can start exercising and what you can do. Walking is great exercise.

What should you be eating?

Food Group	Daily needs	What counts?
Grains <i>Make half your grains whole</i>	6-11 ounces	1 ounce = 1 slice bread; 1 ounce cereal; ½ cup cooked rice or pasta
Vegetables <i>Vary your veggies</i>	3 cups	1 cup = 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables; 2 cups of raw leafy greens
Fruits <i>Focus on Fruits</i>	2 cups	1 cup = 1 cup fruit or fruit juice; ½ cup dried fruit
Milk <i>Get your calcium</i>	3 cups (Teens - 4)	1 cup = 1 cup milk or yogurt; 1½ ounce cheese
Meat and Beans <i>Go lean with protein</i>	6 ounces	1 ounce = 1 ounce meat; 1 tablespoon peanut butter; 1 egg; ¼ cup beans; ½ ounce nuts

These are general guidelines for breastfeeding women. For specific recommendations for you, go to www.mypyramid.gov or talk with your health-care provider.

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