

Breastfeeding Nutrition Therapy

Nutrition Therapy for Breastfeeding Mothers Nutrition During Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding requires more calories (up to 400 more calories per day), protein, vitamins, and minerals than you needed before pregnancy. The exact number of calories you need is determined by how much you are nursing. The more you nurse, the higher your calorie needs.
- Eating a healthy, balanced diet will give your body what it needs and it will help you to produce quality breast milk for your baby.
- Consume a wide variety of food from all the food groups.
- Extra calories should be from nutritious foods, such as lean meats, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and whole grain breads and cereals.
- If you feel that your baby is bothered by a certain food that you eat, stop eating that food for at least 3 days and try it again when your baby is older.
- Drink approximately 12 (8-fluid ounce) caffeine-free beverages per day, according to thirst. Drinking a beverage each time you nurse your baby can help you get the fluids you need.
- Daily Meal Planning Guidelines
- Have at least 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods for adequate calcium and vitamin D intake.
- Eat at least 3 cups of vegetables (including at least 1 cup of dark green or orange vegetables).
- Have at least 3 cups a day of fruit. Limit juice to 100% fruit juice and drink only 1 cup a day.
- Eat 7-8 ounces of grain foods like whole grain bread, cereal, or pasta. At least half your grains should come from whole grains.
- Eat 6-7 ounces of protein foods like meat, fish or poultry.
 - If you do not eat meat, substitute similar amounts of other foods with protein, like cooked dried beans or lentils, tofu or soy, eggs, unsalted nuts, or peanut butter.

Tips

Breastfeeding and Weight Loss

Breastfeeding along with a healthy diet provides a natural way for you to lose weight gained during pregnancy. After all, some of the weight gained during pregnancy is stored to help make breastmilk after your baby is born.

Can breastfeeding help me lose weight?

Yes, breastfeeding can help you lose weight after giving birth. It increases your calorie needs (For example: milk production uses 85 calories from the mother to produce 100 calories of breastmilk for the baby). If you are breastfeeding your baby, you may lose weight without changing your food intake or activity pattern.

How soon can I start losing weight while breastfeeding?

It is important to have good nutrition while your milk supply is established in the first 2 months. Too much weight loss during this time can prevent you from getting enough nutrients to make enough breastmilk for your baby. After your milk supply is established, a slow weight loss (less than 5 pounds per month) is recommended. Losing weight more slowly will help you keep the weight off in the future.

What else can help me lose weight?

- Eat a variety of foods in moderation. use appropriate portion sizes.
- Choose lean protein, lower fat dairy products, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Include 30 minutes of light to moderate exercise (this can result in a weight loss of as much of 1 pound per week while still producing adequate milk for your baby)

How do I get enough calories for breastfeeding while still losing weight?

Breastfeeding mothers must be careful not to restrict calories to below 1500-1800 calories per day. This has been shown to decrease milk production. Your calorie needs depend on your age, weight, and activity level.

Your registered dietitian nutritionist can help you determine the right amount of calories for you.

Foods Not Recommended

Alcohol:

- When breastfeeding, it is recommended to wait until your baby is at least 3 months old until you drink alcohol. Alcohol should be avoided if providing milk to a preterm sick infant
- If you choose to drink, it is best to limit to 1-2 drinks per week. One serving of alcohol is 12 fluid ounces of beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 2 fluid ounces of 80-proof liquor.
- Avoid alcohol for at least 2 hours before you plan to nurse. Utilize your previously expressed milk if you are concerned about nursing your baby after ingesting alcoholic beverages.
- Removing milk from the breasts does not speed elimination of alcohol from the milk, however. It is the alcohol level in a mother's blood that determines the level in her breast milk.

Caffeine:

- Limit drinks with caffeine (coffee and tea) to no more than 2 to 5 cups per day. Newborns, especially preterm infants, typically are more sensitive to caffeine than older infants.
- Other sources of caffeine include some medications and weight-loss aids. Discuss the use of these with your doctor or registered dietitian nutritionist.

Herbal teas:

- Avoid consumption of herbal teas if possible, unless approved by our doctor or lactation consultant.

Fish and shellfish:

- Avoid fish with high mercury levels, such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tile fish.
- Eat no more than 12 ounces per week of fish and shellfish that have lower concentrations of mercury. These include shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish.
- Albacore (white) tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. Limit it to 6 ounces per week.
- If no advice is available about consuming locally caught fish, do not eat more than 6 ounces per week.

Other items to avoid:

- Tobacco (unhealthy for mother and likely to negatively affect milk supply; baby also exposed to second-hand smoke)
- Illicit drugs (dangerous to baby and mother)
- Herbal remedies or supplements: If you do use any teas, herbs, or home remedies, be sure to discuss it with your doctor or lactation consultant to be sure that they are safe for you and your baby
- Vitamin or mineral supplements other than those recommended or prescribed by your doctor, nurse practitioner, or midwife.