

Proper Nutrition While Breastfeeding

General Guidelines

- Breastfeeding requires more calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals than you needed before pregnancy. You need about 400 to 500 more calories per day. The exact number depends on how much you are breastfeeding. The more you breastfeed, the higher your calorie needs.
- Eating a healthy, balanced diet will give your body what it needs. And, it will help you produce quality breast milk for your baby. Eat a wide variety of food from all the food groups.
- Extra calories should be from nutritious foods. These include lean meats, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- If you feel your baby is bothered by a certain food that you eat, stop eating that food for at least 3 days. You can try it again when your baby is older. Your Pediatrician can provide more information.
- Drink about 12 caffeine-free beverages per day (8 ounces each), according to your thirst. Having a glass of water each time you breastfeed your baby can help you get the fluids you need.

Meal Planning Tips

- Every day, eat at least:
 - 3 cups of low-fat or nonfat dairy foods for enough calcium and Vitamin D intake.
 - 3 cups of vegetables (including at least 1 cup of dark green or orange vegetables).
 - 2 cups of fruit. Limit fruit juice to 100% varieties and only 1 cup a day.
- Eat at least 5 to 7 ounces of grain foods like whole-wheat bread, cereal, or pasta. At least half your grains should come from whole grains.
- Eat at least 5 to 6 ounces of protein foods like meat, fish, or poultry.
 - If you do not eat meat, try similar amounts of other protein foods, such as beans, lentils, tofu, soy, eggs, unsalted nuts, or nut butters (peanut, almond, hazelnut).

Foods to Avoid

- **Alcohol:** Wait until your baby is at least 3 months old until you drink alcohol.
 - If you choose to drink, limit alcohol to no more than 1 serving per day. One serving of alcohol is 12 fluid ounces of beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 1.5 fluid ounces of 80-proof liquor.
 - Do not have alcohol at least 4 hours before you plan to nurse.
 - You can pump milk before drinking alcohol so your baby will have breast milk to drink later.
- **Caffeine:** Limit drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, and soda) to no more than 2 to 5 cups per day.
- **Herbal teas:** Avoid consumption of herbal teas if possible, or use with caution.
- **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 locally caught fish, do not eat more than 6 ounces per week.
- **Other items:** Do not use tobacco, illicit drugs, herbal supplements (or be sure to ask your doctor if your herbs and teas are safe for your baby), and vitamin/mineral supplements other than those recommended by your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife, or dietitian.

