

NUTRITION AND FITNESS

HEALTHY EATING

Many new mothers wonder whether they should be on a special diet while breastfeeding, but the answer is no. You can take in the same number of calories that you did before becoming pregnant, which helps with weight loss after birth. There are no foods you need to avoid. In fact, you can continue to enjoy the foods that are important to your family, including the special meals you know and love.

As for how your eating habits affect your baby, there are no special foods that will help you make more milk. You may find that some foods cause stomach upset in your baby. You can try avoiding those foods to see if your baby feels better and ask your baby's doctor for help.

Keep these important nutrition tips in mind:

- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated (but fluid intake does not affect the amount of breastmilk you

make). Drink when you are thirsty, and drink more fluids if your urine is dark yellow. A common suggestion is to drink a glass of water or other beverage every time you breastfeed.

- Limit drinks with added sugars, such as sodas and fruit drinks.
- Limit the amount of caffeine you get each day. Drinking a moderate amount (one or two cups a day) of coffee or other caffeinated beverages does not cause a problem for most breastfeeding babies. Too much caffeine can cause the baby to be fussy or not sleep well.
- Talk to your doctor about taking a supplement. Vitamin and mineral supplements should not replace healthy eating, but in addition to healthy food choices, some breastfeeding women may need a multivitamin and mineral supplement.
- See [page 30](#) for information on drinking alcohol and breastfeeding.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

ChooseMyPlate.gov has tip sheets that you can keep on your refrigerator to remind you to eat healthy. Download and print the “10 Tips Nutrition Education Series” at www.choosemyplate.gov.



CHOOSEMYPLATE FOR MOMS

GET A DAILY PLAN FOR MOMS DESIGNED JUST FOR YOU.

The USDA's online, interactive tool can help you choose foods based on your baby's nursing habits and your energy needs. Visit <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/pregnancy-breastfeeding> to figure out how much you need to eat, choose healthy foods, and get the vitamins and minerals you need.

The SuperTracker tool at <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tools-supertracker> can help you plan, analyze, and track your eating habits and physical activity. You can also set a personal calorie goal!

CAN A BABY BE ALLERGIC TO BREASTMILK?

Research shows that what you eat affects your milk only slightly. Babies love the flavors of foods that come through the milk. Sometimes a baby may be sensitive to something the mother eats such as eggs or dairy products like milk and cheese. Watch your baby for the symptoms listed below, which could indicate that your baby has an allergy or sensitivity to something you eat:

- Diarrhea, vomiting, green stools with mucus or blood

- Rash, eczema, dermatitis, hives, dry skin
- Fussiness during or after feedings
- Inconsolable crying for long periods
- Sudden waking with discomfort
- Wheezing or coughing

These signs do not mean your baby is allergic to your milk, only to something that you ate. You may need to stop eating whatever is bothering your baby or eat less of it. You may find that after a few

months you can eat the food again with better results.

Talk with your baby's doctor if you notice your baby having any of the symptoms listed above. If your baby ever has problems breathing, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

VEGAN DIETS

If you follow a vegan diet or one that does not include any forms of animal protein, you or your baby might not get enough vitamin B-12. In a baby, B-12 deficiency can cause symptoms such as loss of appetite, slow motor development, being very tired, weak muscles, vomiting, and blood problems. You can protect your and your baby's health by taking vitamin B-12 supplements while breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor about your vitamin B-12 needs.

FITNESS

Being active helps you stay healthy, feel better, and have more energy. It does not affect the quality or quantity of your breastmilk or your baby's growth. It

may help to wear a comfortable support bra or sports bra and pads in case you leak during physical activity. It is also important to drink plenty of fluids. Be

sure to talk to your doctor about how and when to slowly begin exercising following your baby's birth.