

Breastfeeding provides your baby with nutrients that will support his or her growth and health. Breastfeeding needs extra calories. Most mothers need to eat 400-500 calories per day more than her pre-pregnancy diet. After starting other foods when your baby is 6 months old, you may make less milk and can cut back on your calorie intake. Continue to provide breastmilk to your baby until they're 12 months old. Avoid losing weight too quickly. Do not use crash or fad diets; these diets don't have a good balance of important nutrients that you and your baby need.

Foods to Eat

Focus on making healthy choices to help fuel your milk supply.

- Eat a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Make half of your grains whole grains.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products as these are a good source of calcium and vitamin D.
- Include lean protein foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, nuts and seeds.
- Eating a variety of different foods while breastfeeding will change the flavor of your breast milk. You don't need to avoid spicy and gas-producing foods.
- Docasahexanoic acid (DHA) is an important omega 3 fatty acid needed for brain growth. You can boost the DHA in your breast milk by eating low mercury fish or DHA-fortified foods. The best sources of DHA are salmon, bluefish, bass, trout, flounder and yellowfin tuna.
- Eat an adequate amount of food rich in vitamin D. Make sure you have 600 international units of vitamin D per day.
- Your health care provider may recommend a multivitamin or that you continue your prenatal vitamin.

Fluids

- Breastfeeding mothers require more fluids.
- Drink 12 eight-ounce glasses per day, before you feel thirsty.
- Tip: Have a glass of water nearby when you breastfeed your baby.

If you have any questions about your infant's nutrition, contact your physician, lactation support or registered dietitian.

References

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Nutrition for Breastfeeding Mothers





Items to Avoid

- **Alcohol:** Wait to consume alcohol until your baby is 3 months old, and wait at least two to three hours after having a single serving of an alcoholic drink before breastfeeding. One serving of alcohol is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 2 ounces of liquor.
- **Caffeine:** Limit drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, sodas, energy drinks) to no more than two cups (8 oz) per day.
- **Herbal teas:** Use herbal teas with caution and discuss with your health care provider.
- **Fish:** Eat 8-12 ounces of fish and shellfish per week. Avoid fish that are high in mercury including swordfish, king mackerel, shark and tilefish. Limit albacore white tuna to 6 ounces per week.
- **Other things to avoid:** Tobacco, street drugs, and herbal remedies or supplements. Talk to your health care provider about all herbal remedies and supplements to be sure they're safe for you and your baby

Vegetarian Diet

- Vegetarian diets and breastfeeding can be healthy.
- Choose foods rich in iron, protein and calcium. Good sources of iron include lentils, enriched cereals, whole-grain products, peas, dark leafy green vegetables and dried fruit.
- For protein, consider dairy products or plant sources, such as soy products and meat substitutes, legumes, beans, tofu, lentils, nuts, seeds and whole grains.
- Good sources of calcium include dairy products and dark green vegetables. Other choices include calcium-fortified products, such as juices, cereals, soy/almond milk and tofu.
- Make sure you eat sources of iron and zinc such as beans, dried fruit, nuts, seeds and dairy.
- If you avoid all animal products (vegan diet), you need to take a B12 supplement to make sure your baby doesn't develop a B12 deficiency.

Daily Nutritional Needs

Food Groups	Breastfeeding	Sample Recommended Foods		Sample Servings
Dairy	3 cups/day	Low-fat yogurt Fat-free milk (skim) Low-fat milk (1%)	Reduced-fat cheese or cottage cheese	1 cup milk 8 ounces yogurt 1½ ounces cheese
Vegetables	3 cups/day or more	Broccoli Carrots Cooked greens (kale, collards, turnip greens)	Spinach Sweet potatoes Tomatoes Winter squash	1 cup raw or cooked vegetables 2 cups raw leafy vegetables 1 cup vegetable juice
Fruit	2-3 cups/day or more	Apples Bananas Cantaloupe Honeydew melon	Mangoes Oranges or orange juice Pears, plums	1 cup fruit 1 cup 100% fruit juice ½ cup dried fruit
Grains	8 ounces/day	Brown/white rice Fortified ready-to-eat cereals Fortified cooked cereal (oatmeal or farina)	Whole grain bread Wheat pasta Quinoa	1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal ½ cup cooked pasta, rice or cereal ½ bun, small bagel or English muffin
Protein	6-7 ounces/day	Lean beef, chicken, turkey, lamb and pork Eggs Cooked dry beans and peas	Nuts and seeds Shrimp, clams, oysters and crab Salmon, halibut, cod, trout, herring and tilapia	1 ounce lean meat, poultry or seafood 1 egg ¼ cup tofu ¼ cup cooked beans ½ cup unsalted nuts 1 tablespoon peanut butter