

Healthy Choices When Breastfeeding



Once you have given birth, it is essential for you to make healthy choices and maintain healthy eating habits. Everything you eat, drink and ingest has a direct impact on the quality of your breast milk and the health of your baby. While breastfeeding, some foods you eat may cause your baby to have gas or be fussy. Other substances, such as alcohol, medications or tobacco smoke, may harm your baby's motor development or slow down the normal rate of weight gain. Mayo Clinic lists the following recommendations for breastfeeding moms.

Nutrition and Fluids

It is important to eat a well-balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, protein, whole grains, and calcium-rich foods. Maintaining a good diet will produce healthy breast milk for your baby and help keep you healthy. Eating a variety of foods can change the flavor of your breast milk, exposing your baby to different tastes. This may help your baby accept solid foods more easily when the time comes.

Limit coffee, tea, colas, and other carbonated drinks that have added caffeine. Caffeine has been shown to pass into breast milk and can cause poor sleeping, nervousness, irritability, and poor feeding in babies.

A nursing mother needs enough fluids to stay hydrated. Most experts recommend drinking enough to satisfy thirst. Aim to drink at least eight glasses of water or other liquids each day. Drinking a glass of water every time you breastfeed can help you reach that goal.



It is important to eat a well-balanced diet when breastfeeding.

Medications

While some over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen, have been found to be safe to use while breastfeeding, always talk with your doctor before taking any medications while you are breastfeeding.

Alcohol

Alcohol has been shown to pass into breast milk. In general, breastfeeding mothers should avoid alcohol.

Smoking

The nicotine in cigarettes passes into breast milk and can reduce your milk supply. Smoking while breastfeeding, or living with someone who smokes, may increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, breathing problems and ear infections in babies.

The choices you make and the lifestyle you lead have a direct impact on you, your baby and the quality of your breast milk.