

Breastfeeding Foods and Nutrition for Mothers

BABY DEVELOPMENT ARTICLES

ARTICLE

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Mothers who breastfeed for more than 3 months must consume more food and increase their calorie intake to be able to provide all the essential vitamins and minerals to their little ones.

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Although your body stored extra fat while you were pregnant, fat storage alone is not enough for breastfeeding.

It is especially important for you, breastfeeding mums, to eat right to give all the essential nutrients to your little ones. Brought to you by Wyeth Nutrition

Mummies, breastfeeding is such an amazing experience for you to bond with your baby better. After 9 months of carrying your little one, your role as life giver continues as you breastfeed.

Your little one relies on you to give them the right nutrients for their growth and development. So, when you are lactating, it is important to put your focus on good nutrition. When you eat right, your body optimises breast milk quality and quantity to give your baby the best, while helping to maintain your health.¹

So, are you eating right for both your body and your baby? Here's a guide on what you'll need to put into your body during breastfeeding period (and what not to!).

Breastfeeding takes up a lot of energy, which means you get to eat more!

Mummy, did you know that you will need a lot more energy when lactating than during pregnancy? You may notice that you're hungry more often and that's totally normal! In general, breastfeeding women need to consume an additional 500 calories

per day. (If you are nursing twins, you will have to eat even more!).²

Although your body stored extra fat while you were pregnant, fat storage alone is not enough for breastfeeding. You will need to consume more in your diet.

In fact, if you breastfeed for more than 3 months, or if your weight happens to drop, you may need to further increase your calorie intake.

Be able to breastfeed better with more protein intake

Mummies, you will also need higher protein requirements than normal. To get the protein you require, you need to consume an additional 20g of protein daily while breastfeeding.

When you consume enough protein, you will be able to produce sufficient milk and still maintain your own protein stores.

Some types of food you can eat to meet your protein goals include fish and seafood, poultry, beef, lamb, liver, eggs, peas, beans, nuts, cereals, milk, cheese and yogurt.

Your baby's development depends on you - so consume more DHA!

The fatty acid docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is important for the visual and mental development of your little one. Your intake of DHA directly affects the DHA content of your breast milk. Additionally, researchers have found a significant association between the DHA content of breast milk and the visual development of infants. So be sure to have plenty of food with DHA content like fish!

To ensure a DHA intake of 300 mg per day, you can even add on supplements to ensure you're reaching your goals.

Pack your breast milk with as much vitamins and minerals as possible

The vitamin content of human milk typically reflects the amounts of vitamins in the mother's diet. Breastfeeding women have higher-than-usual requirements for most vitamins and minerals. Vitamin A, vitamin B6, vitamin D, folic acid, calcium and zinc

are especially important during lactation.³

Vitamin A

Vitamin A is essential for the eyes. An intake of 1,200 mcg of vitamin A per day is recommended for lactating women 19 years old and older. You can get your Vitamin A from liver, eggs, and cheese.

Vitamin B6

Vitamin B6 is important for the production of energy. An intake of 2.0 mg of vitamin B6 per day is recommended for lactating women. Meat, liver, whole grains, legumes and potatoes are good sources of vitamin B6.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps support calcium absorption and is found in fish, liver and egg yolk. It will help your baby absorb the calcium from your breast milk better.

Folic Acid

Folic acid is necessary for normal cell growth and division. Breastfeeding women should consume 500 mcg of folic acid daily. Folic acid is found in liver, leafy green vegetables, oranges, and cantaloupe. However, because it is not certain how much folic acid in foods is readily absorbed, you may want to consume vitamin supplements or fortified milk to ensure adequate intake.

Calcium

Calcium helps build bones and teeth. So, it is important to ensure you get about 1,000 mg a day because your breast milk will draw calcium from your bones. If you don't consume enough calcium in your diet you're putting yourself at risk for bone fractures. So consume plenty of milk, like Wyeth S-26 Mama Maternal and Lactating milk and dairy foods, salmon or sardines with bones, and spinach! To be sure you're hitting your calcium goals; it would be good to also take a calcium supplement.

Zinc

More than 100 enzymes used in digestion and metabolism require zinc. Seafood, liver, and meat are good sources of zinc.

Refrain from eating:

- Some types of cheese, particularly soft cheese, such as Camembert and Brie, goats' cheese (especially chevre) and blue mould-ripened cheeses can contain listeria, a type of bacteria that can be harmful to your child.
- Raw or partially cooked eggs - both the yolk and egg white need to be solid to avoid the risk of salmonella.
- Raw or undercooked meat - especially poultry. Make sure these foods are thoroughly cooked and piping hot all the way through. Also make sure meat is not pink in the middle before you eat it!
- Avoid fresh tuna and raw fish or oysters

- Alcohol and caffeine⁴

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