



## NUTRITION FOR BREASTFEEDING WOMEN

Your milk is the best food for your baby even if you do not eat perfectly every day. But healthy eating is important for you. You need to eat well to feel good, have more energy and stay healthy. Try these healthy eating tips:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Include dark-green, red, and orange vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains. Try oatmeal, whole-grain bread, and brown rice.
- Move to low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- Vary your protein. Choose seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Drink when you are thirsty. A common suggestion is to drink a glass of water every time you breastfeed. It is important to stay hydrated, but extra fluids will not increase your milk supply. Limit drinks with added sugars, such as sodas and fruit drinks.
- Eat 3 meals and 2-3 snacks through the day. Go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) for additional tips and other meal and snack ideas.

### SHOULD I TAKE A SUPPLEMENT?

Vitamin and mineral supplements should not replace healthy eating, but most doctors recommend continuing your prenatal vitamin with iron while breastfeeding.

Some women have a lot of blood loss during delivery. The loss of blood affects your iron stores and you may feel more weak or tired. To help your body recover:

- Eat foods high in iron including, red meat, pork and poultry, seafood, beans, dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, and whole grain cereals.
- Vitamin C foods help your body absorb iron. Eat fruits and vegetables that have more Vitamin C such as oranges, strawberries, 100% fruit juice, broccoli, tomatoes, and bell peppers.



## SHOULD I AVOID CERTAIN FOODS?

Every baby is different. Most moms may eat anything they want while breastfeeding. Some find that certain foods seem to affect their baby.

If you notice a pattern, try to keep track of exactly what you eat and how your baby responds, then talk to your baby's doctor.

## CAN I DRINK ALCOHOL?

Alcohol does pass into breastmilk. Avoid drinking regularly or a lot at one time. Occasionally having one or two drinks is fine. Wait at least 2 hours if you had one drink (or 4 hours if you had two drinks) before you breastfeed your baby. If you plan to drink more, talk with your doctor.

Drinking too much affects how you care for your baby and may prevent you from responding to your baby's needs.

## WHAT ABOUT CAFFEINE?

It is best to limit the amount of caffeine you consume while breastfeeding. Limit your intake to one or two cups of caffeine a day, more than that may affect your baby's mood and sleep.

## WHAT MEDICINES CAN I TAKE?

You can take certain medications while breastfeeding, but not all. Almost all medications pass into your milk in small amounts.

Some have no effect on your baby and can be used while breastfeeding. Always talk to your baby's doctor and your doctor or pharmacist about medications you are using while breastfeeding.

### ➤ TIP: <

For additional questions visit [womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding](https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding), speak to a Registered Dietitian or your health care provider.

