



For Breastfeeding Moms

Contact a Breastfeeding Specialist in your local WIC office, hospital, physician, or health department if you have questions or need help with breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is a special gift only you can give your baby.

Nutrition

Continue to eat a variety of foods each day based on [MyPlate \(www.choosemyplate.gov\)](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) guidelines. While you are breastfeeding, eat at least the following number of servings each day:

- 3 servings from the milk group
- 5 ½ to 6 ½ servings from the meat group
- 2 ½ to 3 servings from the vegetable group
- 2 servings from the fruit group
- 6 - 8 servings from the bread group

It's important for all women of childbearing age including breastfeeding women to consume extra amounts of a B vitamin called folic acid. Adequate folic acid intake during the several weeks before conception as well as during the first 4 weeks of pregnancy may help prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord. Please click on the following link for more information:

[Facts About Folic Acid](#)

As a nursing mom, you don't need to stop eating certain foods such as "gassy" or spicy foods unless they seem to bother your baby. If you feel your baby is reacting to something you ate, try avoiding that food for a few days and then reintroducing it into your diet. If the symptoms improve when you avoid a food and get worse when you begin eating it again, you may want to avoid that food while you're breastfeeding. However, if the symptoms do not get better or do not return when putting that food back in your baby's diet, the food is not causing the problem. Remember that mothers from many cultures eat many different foods and breastfeed their babies successfully. Babies may be fussy for many reasons unrelated to breastfeeding.

Keep Your Baby Safe

Alcohol passes into your breast milk and can interfere with successful breastfeeding. It's best to limit alcohol to no more than 1 drink on a special occasion.

Most medicines are safe to take while breastfeeding -- check with your health care provider to be sure about any over-the-counter or prescribed medicines you are taking.

Try to drink caffeine-free beverages or limit regular coffee, tea, soda or cocoa to a total of 2 cups a day. Drink enough other fluids such as milk, fruit juice, or water to satisfy your thirst and your nutritional needs.

If you smoke, it is best for you and your baby to quit as soon as possible. If you can't quit, it is still better to breastfeed because it can help protect your baby from respiratory problems and sudden infant death syndrome. Be sure to smoke away from your baby and change your clothes to keep your baby away from the chemicals smoking leaves behind. Ask your health care provider for help quitting smoking.