

Eating Well for New Moms

Your nutrient needs are higher during pregnancy and breastfeeding. New moms can be mindful to choose foods to help them feel their best and help meet their nutrient needs, as well as replace their body's nutrient losses after pregnancy and birth. Making positive changes to your eating habits will also help you be a good role model for your child and family.

Tips to Get Started

- Eating well is not just about what you eat, but also how you eat. Enjoy food with others and prepare your own foods when possible.
- Eat based on your true appetite. Pay attention to feelings of hunger and thirst, as your appetite may increase as your body produces breast milk.
- Be mindful to take the proper time to eat. Plan your meals ahead of time and include your family's culture, food traditions and taste preferences. Try to decrease distractions during meals.
- Eat a variety of foods from [Canada's Food Guide](#).
- Include plenty of fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits and whole grain foods. Choose protein foods such as milk products or fortified unsweetened soy beverages, as well as chicken, fish, eggs, beef, nuts, beans and legumes. Choose protein foods that come from plants most often.
- Aim to eat 3 balanced meals a day with nourishing snacks in between. Balanced meals look similar to the snapshot from [Canada's Food Guide](#), with $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate full of vegetables and fruits, $\frac{1}{4}$ from whole grains and $\frac{1}{4}$ from lean protein choices.
- You need small amounts of extra servings of food to provide enough nutrients for yourself and to make breastmilk for your baby (read on for snack ideas).
- Choose water most often to quench your thirst. You need about 12 cups or 3 litres of fluids per day. Keep a glass of water close to where you feed and drink with every feed.



Changes in Your Body after Pregnancy

During the 9 months of pregnancy your body has gone through many changes.

Things to keep in mind:

- Changes in body shape and weight were needed to support a healthy pregnancy.
- Choosing a variety of foods, eating regularly throughout the day, and participating in joyful movement helps new moms feel their best, without decreasing breast milk supply.
- Dieting can be harmful and is not recommended. Restriction can make you feel tired and make you more likely to get sick.
- Approach your body changes with kindness. Role model body acceptance with your child.



Frequently Asked Questions about Breastfeeding and Nutrition

What are some examples of snacks to eat while breastfeeding?

- 1% milk, slice whole grain bread, peanut butter and banana
- Plain Greek yogurt, mixed berries, whole grain cereal
- Lentil & vegetable soup, hard cheese and whole grain crackers
- Raw vegetables, hummus, whole wheat tortilla
- Roasted almonds, apple and unsweetened soy beverage
- Tuna salad on whole wheat bread, grapes and 1% milk
- Spinach salad with roasted walnuts, chopped mixed veggies, grated cheddar cheese and oil-based vinaigrette
- Smoothie made with 1 banana, ½ cup mixed frozen berries, ½ cup Greek Yogurt, fresh spinach and 1 cup milk



Are there any foods that I should not eat when I am breastfeeding?

Most foods can be enjoyed while breastfeeding. You do not need to avoid [allergenic foods](#) like milk, eggs, peanuts or fish as there is no proof that avoiding these foods will protect your child from developing an allergy. Occasionally, infants may be sensitive to certain foods in the mother's diet. If you think your baby is fussy or gassy from certain foods you have eaten, stop eating them for about a week. Try them again to see if your baby reacts the same to them.

What about drinking alcohol?

It is best for breastfeeding moms to avoid drinking [alcohol](#). Alcohol passes into your breast milk within 30-60 minutes after you start drinking. Alcohol can reduce your milk supply and interfere with your release of milk. Discuss alcohol and breastfeeding with your healthcare provider.

Is caffeine safe to have in my diet?

[Caffeine](#) is a stimulant found naturally in foods such as coffee, tea and chocolate. It is also added to energy drinks and pop. Caffeine passes into breast milk and may keep your baby awake and decrease your milk supply. Health Canada recommends a maximum of **300 mg of caffeine** per day for new moms. This amount of caffeine is found in about two cups (8 oz./250 ml.) of coffee. Green and black teas have 30-50 mg of caffeine per 250 ml or 1 cup.



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