

# Nutrition Facts

## Healthy Eating for New Moms

Healthy eating and regular physical activity after pregnancy will help you and your baby stay healthy. Eating healthy foods helps to replace your body's nutrient stores after pregnancy and birth. It will also help you be a good role model for your child and family.

### Tips to Get Started with Healthy Eating

- **Use Canada's Food Guide** to plan meals and snacks.
- Include plenty of fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits and whole grain products. Choose protein foods such as lower fat 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 healthy snacks in between. Balanced meals look similar to the snapshot from Canada's Food Guide (above), 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 calories and nutrients for yourself and to make breastmilk for your baby (see other side for healthy snack ideas)
- Choose water most often to quench your thirst. You need about 12 cups or 3 litres of fluids per day.
- Keep vegetables and fruit clean and cut in the fridge for quick snacks.
- Eat breakfast daily; it may help control hunger and prevent overeating of unhealthy foods later in the day.
- Healthy eating is more than just *what* you eat; *how* and *why* you eat are just as important. 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. Take the time to eat with others. Cook often and enjoy a wide variety of foods.



### Changes in Your Body after Pregnancy

During the 9 months of pregnancy, your body has gone through many changes. Expect that it will take time to return to your pre-pregnant self.

Things to keep in mind:

- Changes in body shape and weight were needed to support a healthy pregnancy.
- Breastfeeding, along with healthy eating and regular physical activity, helps with the return to pre-pregnancy shape without decreasing breast milk supply.
- Strict dieting is unlikely to result in long term weight loss and could be harmful. Cutting back on your food intake too much may make you feel tired and more likely to get sick.
- Be kind to yourself as you accept the changes in your body and take pride in being a healthy role model for your new baby.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Breastfeeding and Nutrition

### What are some examples of healthy snacks to eat while breastfeeding?

- 1 cup of 1% milk, 1 slice whole grain bread, 1 Tbsp. peanut butter and 1 banana
- 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt, 1/2 cup mixed berries, 1/4 cup whole grain cereal
- 1 cup lentil & vegetable soup, 30 grams hard cheese and 6-8 whole grain crackers
- 1 cup mixed raw vegetables, 1/4 cup hummus, 1 small whole wheat tortilla
- 1/4 cup (about 23) unsalted almonds, 1 apple and 1 cup unsweetened soy beverage
- Tuna salad on 1 slice whole wheat bread, 1 cup grapes and 1 cup 1% milk
- Spinach salad with 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped mixed veggies, 1/4 cup grated cheddar cheese and 1 Tbsp. oil based vinaigrette
- Smoothie made with 1 banana, 1/2 cup mixed frozen berries, 1/2 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.

### How much water do I need to drink in a day?

You need about 3 litres (12 cups) of fluid. Choose water most often, and include unsweetened milk or fortified unsweetened soy beverages daily. Keep a glass of water close to where you feed and drink with every feed.



### References

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