



Dietary Guidelines During Pregnancy



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Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both the mother and the infant. Therefore, the World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, and then continuing breastfeeding while introducing solid foods until your child is 12 months old or older. It is important for you to follow a healthy and balanced diet and not engage in any restrictive diets, to help maintain a healthy milk production and composition. This way, your baby receives the necessary nutrients without depriving you of any vitamins.

During breastfeeding, it is recommended that you follow your hunger. This way, breastfeeding helps you lose the baby weight gained during pregnancy.

Healthy Dietary Habits During Breastfeeding:

Breastfeeding is the only nutrition source for newborns. To give your baby nutrients that promote growth and health, eat a diet rich in the following basic food groups:

Calcium

Calcium is available in dairies and its derivatives: milk, yogurt, and cheese. Calcium is essential for milk production, that's why your diet must include 3-4 servings of low-fat or whole-fat dairy products a day. However it is recommended to take the full-fat versions to provide your baby with their daily needs of fats. Additionally, yellow cheeses (rich in fat) have higher calcium content than white cheeses.

Iron and Proteins

Iron is an essential element for the health of both the mother and the baby. Therefore, the iron levels in your body should be high enough for milk production in order to prevent anemia.

Research has shown that iron deficiency during breastfeeding can have long-term effects on children, up till the age of nine. This is shown through deficit in attention and concentration.

Iron from food comes in two forms:

1- Heme iron :
(More easily absorbed by the body).
Found in red meat in higher percentage, poultry, fish and eggs.

2- Non-heme iron:
(More slowly absorbed and present in lower quantities compared to the direct sources which is the heme iron).

Examples include:

Grains: such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas...

Leafy Greens: Such as spinach, vine leaves, jute mallow (Mloukhiye), rocca , and all leaves that are dark green.

It is recommended to have this category with vitamin C (such as adding a squeeze of lemon juice or orange) to help your body absorb iron more efficiently.

Fluids:

During breastfeeding, it's essential to drink to satisfy your thirst, as breastfeeding mothers are more prone to dehydration. Aim for 2 liters (which is the recommended daily amount) equivalent to 6-8 cups a day.

Keeping a beverage within reach during the breastfeeding period is a good idea.

You can also increase your fluid intake by drinking natural juices, non-creamy soups, milk, and herbal teas.

It's advisable to have caffeine in moderation, as it can pass to the baby through breast milk, potentially causing irritability, discomfort and disturbances in their sleep pattern. Caffeine is found in coffee, instant coffee, soft drinks, tea..

limit caffeine to one cup of coffee per day while spacing it away from

breastfeeding time and meals containing iron. It's recommended to avoid beverages containing aspartame and all types of sugar substitutes, as there is limited information regarding the safety of their use during breastfeeding.

Whole Grains:

Folic acid is one of the most important vitamins found in breast milk and is present in whole grains, bread, and pasta.

Whole grains not only provide you with a healthy dose of fiber and iron but also contain essential nutrients to help you meet your daily requirements. Including whole grains in your diet supports you with vitamins and can be consumed along with milk.

Eggs:

Egg yolks are important as they are among the few foods containing vitamin D.

They also provide you with proteins and increase the level of essential fatty acids in breast milk. You can consume eggs boiled or in an omelet, for example. It's recommended to consume eggs moderately, around 3 eggs per week.

Is there any food to avoid?

- You can eat anything but in moderation.
- Certain foods (such as broccoli, asparagus) and beverages can pass into the breast milk and may affect your baby, causing symptoms like colic, irritation and discomfort.

However, every mother and child is unique, so there are no strict rules about what should be consumed or avoided in meals.

Certain food like garlic, spices, onions, highly seasoned foods and spicy sauces, might affect the taste of your milk leading to your baby not accepting it. If the baby shows some discomfort consider avoiding these food, otherwise you can continue to eat them without issue.

- Avoid alcohol and smoking.

Finally, regarding exercise, when your doctor clears you to resume physical activity, it is advisable not to engage in exercises that require a lot of efforts. It is recommended to pump or finish breastfeeding before or two hours after exercising.

Food Categories:

Protein-rich Foods

Amount of portion/day	One Portion is equivalent to
4 portions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 medium slice of lean meat (beef), chicken without skin or fish (30g) • 1 medium slice of turkey (30g) • 1/2 cup of mashed beans (hummus, white beans, lentils) • 1 egg • 1 portion of milk or milk products

Carbohydrates

Amount of portion/day	One Portion is equivalent to
6-11 portions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/4 loaf of arabic bread (25g) • 1 piece of french baguette (28g) • 1 toast (25g) • 1/2 cup of cooked pasta, potato or burghul • 1/3 cup of cooked rice • 1/3 cup of beans (chickpea, fava beans, lentils) • 1/2 cup of cornflakes

Vegtebales

Amount of portion/day	One Portion is equivalent to
5-6 portions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of raw vegetables

Fruits

Amount of portion/day	One Portion is equivalent to
4-5 portions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 medium apple, medium orange, medium banana, 2 figs, 2 apricots • 1/2 cup fresh orange juice • 1/2 cup fresh fruit salad

Oils

Amount of portion/day	One Portion is equivalent to
4-5 portions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 teaspoon of oil • 6-7 olives • 2 tablespoons of tahina • 1 tablespoon of peanut butter • 1/8 avocado • 6-7 raw nuts

Water

Amount of portion/day	One Portion is equivalent to
at least 8 cups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup of 240ml

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call us at:

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