American University Of Beirut Medical Center
Dietary Department
Tel 01/354521

DIET FOR LACTATION

Breast Feeding, your best choice...WHY?

Breast milk...

◆ **Is nutritious:** it provides your baby with a nutritionally complete feed and it is easy for the baby to digest and absorb.

◆ **Protects from disease:**
  ✓ Breast milk has many factors that provide immunity to the baby.
  ✓ It protects your baby from infections, respiratory problems, gastrointestinal problems, diarrhea, and middle ear problems.
  ✓ Babies do not develop allergic reactions to breast milk.

◆ **Provides ideal growth:**
  ✓ Breast fed babies grow normally
  ✓ Less likely to be overweight
  ✓ Breast feeding promotes good jaw and tooth growth

◆ **Promotes bonding:** breastfeeding gives you and the baby time alone to develop the special loving bond that will last a lifetime.

◆ **Breastfeeding also benefits YOU!...How?**
  It stimulates the contractions of the uterus after childbirth and helps you loose all that extra weight you gained during pregnancy. A study shows that you burn **500 calories** a day breastfeeding!

© 2008 American University of Beirut Medical Center
What is the DIET for breastfeeding?
You are advised to eat adequately during lactation and not to try to lose weight. A minimum of 1800 calories a day is needed to promote good milk volume.

The Food Guide Pyramid is a starting point for any healthy diet. As a breastfeeding woman, your needs may increase for protein, calcium and some vitamins.
With some changes to the pyramid, you can guarantee a well-balanced nutritious diet for lactation:

◆ **Foods High in Calcium:**
Choose 3-4 servings from the Milk food group:
1 serving =
- 1 cup of milk (3 Tbsp* powder milk)
- ¾ cup of high calcium milk (2 ¼ Tbsp powder milk)
- 1 cup yogurt
- 2 cups ice cream
- 8 Tbsp labneh
- 1 cup custard, rice pudding or muhalabiyeh
- 45g Gruyere cheese
- 45g Cheddar cheese
- 60 g Mozzarella or Baladi cheese
- 60g Fetta cheese
- 45g Halloumi cheese
- 65g Akkawi cheese
- 85g Double crème cheese
- 15 Tbsp Philadelphia cheese

* P.S: Tbsp stands for tablespoon
tsp stands for teaspoon
1 cup = 250mls

◆ **Foods High in Protein:** Choose 2-3 servings of the Meat food group
1 serving =
- 60-90g lean meat, chicken without skin, fish
- 1 cup cooked beans (hummus, beans, lentils…)
(1 egg can replace 30g meat or ½ cup cooked beans)

◆ **Carbohydrates:** choose 6-11 servings from the Bread Food group
1 serving =
- ¼ loaf Arabic bread, preferably brown
- 1 sliced bread (30g)
- ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, burghol
- ¾ cup cornflakes or other breakfast cereal
**Fruits and Vegetables; high in needed vitamins:**

Choose 2-4 servings of fruits and 3-5 servings of vegetables.

1 serving fruits =
- 1 piece of any fruit, try choosing ones with high vitamin C, like citrus fruits, strawberries and kiwi. The more colorful, the healthier!
- ½ cup fresh juice.

1 serving vegetables =
- 1 cup of raw or ½ cup cooked vegetables. Choose vegetables high in vitamins C and A… like tomatoes, carrots, and leafy greens.

**Fats and oils:** use as little as possible, a maximum of 3-4 tsp a day.

**What about fluids??**
Try to drink 8-12 cups of water a day. Don’t wait till you feel thirsty! 1 cup of milk, yogurt, and diet sodas can replace water. However, be wary of the caffeine content of coffee and tea. For more information refer to the section on caffeine.
Let’s spend a day together choosing what to eat:

**Breakfast:** 1 cup of milk (1 milk serving) with 1½ cup of cornflakes (2 bread servings)
1 orange (1 fruit serving)

**Snack:** ¼ loaf Arabic bread (brown) (1 bread serving) + 45g Halloumi cheese (1 thick slice =1 milk serving)

**Lunch:** 90g steak (almost 9 cubes =1½ meat serving) +1 baked potato (2 vegetables)
2 cups of salad (2 vegetables) with lemon/oil dressing (2 tsp oil) (2 fat servings)
1 banana (1 fruit serving)
1 cup rice pudding (1 milk serving)

**Snack:** 1 cup yogurt (1 milk serving) with 1 cup strawberries (1 fruit serving)
2 pieces French toast (2 bread servings) with 4 Tbsp labneh diet (½ milk serving)
1 tsp olive oil (1 fat serving)

**Dinner:** Tuna pasta salad made with lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber (3 vegetables),
½ cup pasta (1 bread serving) and 100g tuna canned in water equivalent to a small can (1½ meat serving) with lemon dressing
1 apple (1 fruit serving)

A quick look at our day reveals; 4½ servings of the Milk group, 4 servings of fruits, 7 servings of vegetables, 6 bread servings, 190g meats, a minimal intake of oils & 2300 calories approximately.
Tips on loosing weight:

Remember: Severe dieting is not recommended while breastfeeding. Very restrictive diets can negatively affect milk volume and content. You can still lose weight though, just follow these tips:

- Choose skim or low fat milk, yogurt and labneh. They have the same calcium content as full fat versions but are lower in calories
- Choose baked or boiled foods instead of fried to lower your fat intake per day
- Snack on raw vegetables
- Limit sweets like cakes, cookies and chocolate as they are dense in calories and empty in nutrients
- Limit the amount of fats and oils you eat a day
- Take a walk with your baby everyday
- Drink lots of water
- Choose the lower number of exchanges in each food group

What are some things you should be aware of??

- **Bloating:** there are some foods that are gas forming and may cause bloating and flatulence. If you suffer from these symptoms avoid such foods like: beans, peas, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, melons and carbonated beverages.

- **Constipation:** a main complaint after giving birth. Make sure to eat a lot of raw fruits and vegetables, dried fruits as well as whole wheat bread and cereals, as these foods provide you with fiber to ease constipation. Increase your intake of fluids as you increase your fiber intake.

- **Caffeine:** excess intake of caffeine should be avoided while breastfeeding. A maximum of 650mg is allowed. Some examples of caffeine containing food items:
  - 1 can Coke: 37 mg caffeine
  - 1 cup brewed coffee (180mls): 103 mg caffeine
  - 1 tsp instant coffee: 57 mg caffeine
  - 1 cup tea (180mls): 36 mg caffeine
  - 1 chocolate bar (60g): 2-40 mg caffeine

- **Spices and Strong flavored foods:** some foods may alter the flavor of the milk and make the infant fussy. Examples of such foods are spices, garlic, onion, cumin and alcohol.
Sugar substitutes: limited information is available regarding the safety of their use. So if you choose to use them, do so in moderation.

Alcohol: a very minimal amount of alcohol is allowed during breastfeeding. Alcoholic beverages provide calories, but little or no nutrients. If you chose to drink, limit yourself to 1-2 drinks/ day. 1 drink is equivalent to: 1 can of beer, 120mls wine or 45mls liquor.

Exercise: it has no bad adverse effect on the amount or composition of your milk. However, very strenuous exercise may cause lactic acid to accumulate in breast milk and may be distasteful to the baby. Consult your physician.