



How to Take Care of Yourself While You're Breastfeeding: A Guide for Mothers

As a new mother, you have enough to worry about without wondering if you're doing the right things to take care of yourself. Fortunately, there are some easy guidelines to follow. We'll go over what to do when you're breastfeeding and tips including ensuring you're getting enough calories and staying hydrated.



Nursing mothers should aim to eat more calories - about 500 extra per day

Mothers who are breastfeeding have special nutritional needs. While most adults require about 2,000 calories per day to maintain a healthy body weight, breastfeeding mothers should aim for at least 2,500 calories a day. This is because 500 of these calories are used in milk production to ensure that the mother's body continues to produce enough healthy breast milk for her baby. Eating sufficient amounts of food with an assortment of vitamins and minerals is essential for maintaining energy levels and overall nutrition for both mother and baby.





Eat a variety of nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein

Nursing mothers should opt for protein-rich foods such as lean meat, eggs, dairy products, beans and lentils, and low-mercury seafood. Additionally, a variety of whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables are recommended to help ensure adequate nutrition for both the mother and baby.



Lean proteins:

Consuming lean proteins such as fish, poultry, eggs help ensure adequate nutrition for the baby.



Whole grains:

Including whole grain foods such as oats, barley, quinoa help provide energy to mothers who are breastfeeding.



Healthy fats:

Adding healthy fats like avocados, nuts, seeds not only help keep mothers feeling full but also provides important fatty acids.



Dairy products:

Choosing dairy products such as low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese helps provide much needed calcium.



Legumes:

Eating legumes such as lentils or beans can help provide the essential vitamins and minerals needed during breastfeeding.

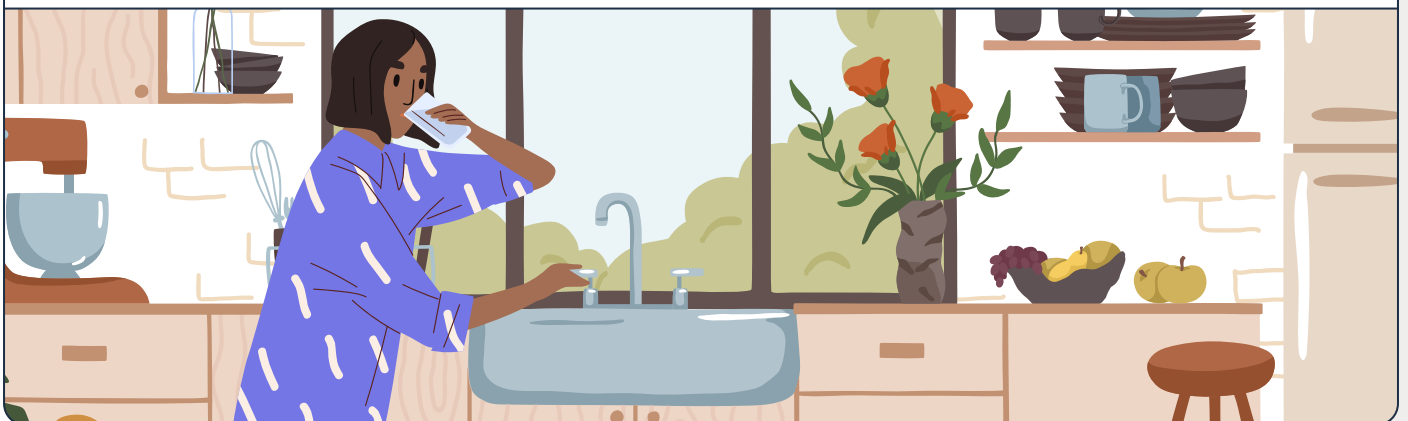


Eggs:

Eating eggs is a great source of choline which is an important nutrient while breastfeeding.

Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated while breastfeeding

If you're nursing, there's an extra burden placed upon your body. Consequently, it's essential to ensure that you stay hydrated throughout the process. It's recommended that new mothers drink 8-12 cups of water daily to stay hydrated.



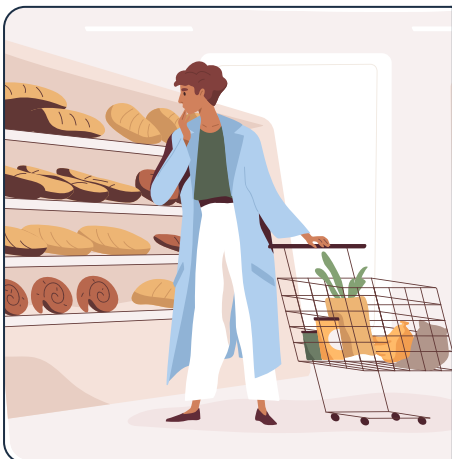


Drinking caffeine and alcohol while breastfeeding

Recommendations vary, but across most studies there does not appear to be risk to baby with two-to-three cups of normal strength coffee per day. Some infants are particularly sensitive to what their mothers eat and drink but for the majority they will not be affected. While there is clear evidence of risks of alcohol consumption to the baby during pregnancy, risks during breast feeding are not established. Light occasional alcohol consumption is unlikely to be cause for concern. However, it is essential not to co-sleep with baby after drinking any alcohol since the risk of cot death in this setting is much higher.

Getting enough rest while breastfeeding

After giving birth, many mothers experience iron deficiency, anaemia or a flare-up of thyroid conditions, all of which can affect sleep. It's important for new mothers to speak with their doctor and get blood tests done if they're feeling particularly exhausted; this will help ensure the fatigue is not being caused by any underlying health issues like post-natal depression which affects 10% of women. Furthermore, it's essential that mothers don't feel guilty about broken sleep as breastfeeding at night often boosts milk production in those early weeks - there are benefits! Addressing physical factors such as anaemia or other deficiencies could make all the difference when seeking relief from tiredness during motherhood.



What to do if you're struggling with what to eat

Planning healthy meals and snacks doesn't have to be overwhelming - a professional can help you. Registered dietitians are natural problem-solvers and incredibly knowledgeable about food, nutrition, and dietary needs. When times get tough, and you're not sure what to do or where to start when it comes to eating healthily, talking to a dietitian is one of the smartest moves you can make. They will assess your eating habits and suggest improvements and empower you by providing the tools and knowledge needed for making an informed decision about food.



If you're feeling overwhelmed, or simply need advice, reach out to your HealthHero or Validium service today.

