

What does healthy eating look like?

Breastfeeding mothers often worry about what they should be eating to make “enough milk” for their baby. The good news is that your body is designed to make plenty of milk for your baby or babies. Eat well so that your milk has lots of nutrients and your body stays healthy.

Canada’s Food Guide can help you choose healthy foods. To get a copy of the Food guide, please call the health unit at 625-8315 or visit the Health Canada website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Follow these tips to get you started:

♥**Enjoy a variety of foods** from each food group every day.

There are 4 food groups:

- ♥Grain products
- ♥Vegetables and fruit
- ♥Milk products
- ♥Meat and alternatives

♥**Try not to skip meals** – Aim for at least 3 meals a day and snack in between if you’re hungry.

♥**Follow your body’s cues** -Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full. Drink enough fluids to satisfy your thirst.



Healthy foods to choose more often are:

- ♥dried or canned peas, beans and lentils
- ♥foods lower in saturated and trans fat
- ♥whole grain and enriched products
- ♥vegetables and fruit, especially those that are orange and dark green
- ♥leaner meats, poultry and fish

Do I need to eat more?

While you are breastfeeding you need extra food to meet your increased energy needs. You may feel hungrier than usual. This is your body telling you to eat and drink more.

In the first 6 months you’ll need to add 2-3 extra servings from the food groups. For example:

- 2/3 cup low fat fruit yogurt & ¼ cup granola
- 1 cup of 1% milk, 1 ¼ cup cheerios, 1 banana
- 1.5 oz cheddar cheese and 4 soda crackers
- 2 tbsp peanut butter, 1 bagel

After the first 6 months you’ll need a bit more to eat to keep up with the baby’s growth needs. As well, if you become pregnant while breastfeeding you will need to further increase your food intake.

Are there specific nutrients I need when breastfeeding?

While you are breastfeeding, your body needs more calcium, magnesium, zinc, folate and vitamin B6. Eating a variety of foods from Canada’s Food Guide will allow you to obtain all of these nutrients. Choose whole grain foods, lower fat milk products, dark green and orange vegetables and leaner meats.

Do I need to drink milk?

You don’t need to drink milk to make milk. However, you need foods that are a good source of calcium. Breastfeeding women to get the calcium they need, require 3 servings from the milk and alternatives group daily.

Servings of calcium rich food include:

- 1 cup milk
- ¾ cup yogurt
- 2 oz or 50 g of cheese
- 1 cup calcium fortified soy milk or orange juice



Lower fat milk products such as skim milk or 1 % milk fat yogurt provide plenty of protein and calcium. Salmon and sardines with bones, broccoli, dried peas, lentils, beans and tofu are also good sources of calcium.

If you do not like milk or milk products, talk to a dietitian to learn how to plan meals with enough calcium.

Can I have drinks or foods that contain caffeine?

Some caffeine is okay but too much may cause your baby to be very active and have trouble sleeping. Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, cola and chocolate. It is also found in some medications. Limit coffee to one to two (8 oz) cups per day

Do I need to take vitamins?

Not if you are eating in a healthy way most of the time. Do not worry if there are some days when you are not able to eat well. You will still make enough milk for your baby. Your body stores nutrients for those days but it’s important to get back on track as soon as you can.

Are there foods I should not eat while I am breastfeeding?

No. Eat foods that you enjoy. However, if you think you are eating a food that causes problems for your baby, talk to your health care provider.



I want to lose the weight I gained during my pregnancy. Is it a good idea to diet when I am breastfeeding?

No. You should not diet when you are breastfeeding. You need lots of energy and good foods to make milk with the nutrients your baby needs.

Giving birth brings changes to your body and shape. If you are feeling discouraged because your body is not the same as it was before pregnancy remember:

- The weight you gained came on slowly and will gradually come off. Research shows that breastfeeding will help you lose weight if combined with healthy eating and physical activity.
- Body changes are unique for each woman – how much or how fast you change will depend on your genetics and your lifestyle.



Quick and Easy Nutrient-Rich Foods

- Add berries or dried fruit to salads and cereal.
- Grab a handful of vegetables and use a salad dressing as dip.
- Add bananas to yogurt.
- Eat a bran muffin instead of a donut.
- Buy whole grain crackers and cut up some cheese.
- Sprinkle cheese on top of vegetables.
- Go nutty – why not add nuts to salads, stir-fries or just grab a handful for a tasty snack.
- Keep lots of fruit on hand even if its canned.
- Hard-boiled eggs – nutritious and delicious.

Questions? Call the Family Health Program at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit 625-5972 in Thunder Bay or toll free in the 807 area code at 1-888-294-6630 or visit us at www.tbdhu.com

If you have questions about nutrition please call to speak to a Public Health Dietitian at 625-8813.

You can get more breastfeeding help from these community resources

Breastfeeding Connection	
Nipigon	887-0264
Schreiber	824-3552
Marathon	229-0793
Manitouwadge	826-2883
La Leche League	344-3857
Breastfeeding Clinic	625-5916
24 hour referral line	626-9626
Tollfree	1-877-586-5638



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Health Canada recommends breastfeeding up to 2 years and beyond.

Healthy Eating for Breastfeeding Mothers



Congratulations on the birth of your baby! It is important for both you and your baby that you take care of yourself. Part of taking care of yourself means eating right.