



Breastfeeding is the best nutrition you can provide to your newborn. 1 Not only does breastfeeding provide a first healthy step for your baby, but it is also very rewarding for parents. Keeping a strong milk supply requires self-care every step of the way. Here are some tips on how to take the best care of yourself while breastfeeding.

Getting Support

The first step to successful breastfeeding is surrounding yourself with a solid support group. Your support group can include:

- Partner
- Family members
- Doctor
- Lactation Specialist
- Friends
- Online or community breastfeeding groups

Get Enough Rest

Sleep is essential to your ability to breastfeed but it can be difficult to obtain when you're taking care of a baby. To get more sleep:

- Take turns napping with your partner
- Sleep when baby sleeps
- Say "Yes!" to help from friends and family
- Say "No" to added responsibility so you can focus on taking the best care of yourself

Stay Active

Exercise provides many health benefits, including:

- increased energy
- reduced stress and depression
- insulin and glucose control
- blood pressure control 2

Stay Hydrated

Drink 8 ounces of water 6 times a day!

Reduce Exposure to Toxins

To protect your breastfed baby from harmful substances, avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs unless prescribed by a health care provider.

You can also reduce exposure to chemicals and toxins by avoiding or limiting meat and dairy intake.³

Keep a Happy Mood

Many parents experience post-partum depression. Post-partum depression is a complex mood disorder with multiple factors contributing to depressed mood. Postpartum depression can show up as sadness, irritability, not sleeping well, abnormal appetite, or problems bonding with the baby. Adequate nutrition, exercise, sleep, and social support can all improve your mood. Need Help? Call your healthcare provider or call 1-800-662- HELP

["Neither where a person lives, works, and gives birth, nor a person's race or gender should determine whether they have the option to breastfeed." Amani Echols, ACLU](#)

Healthy Eating for Breastfeeding

Increased intake of whole plant foods has been associated with weight loss, reductions in blood pressure, improved insulin sensitivity, and decreased symptoms of post-partum depression.^{4,5,6,7}



Stay Healthy While Breastfeeding

POWER FOODS for Breastfeeding

- Beans: kidney, pinto, lentils, black beans, chickpeas, etc.
- Grains: oatmeal, quinoa, wild rice, brown rice, farro, millet, barley
- Fruit: blueberries, raspberries, apples, oranges, etc.
- Vegetables: broccoli, carrots, zucchini, peppers, potatoes, squash
- Leafy greens: spinach, kale, Swiss chard, collard greens, etc.
- Nuts and Seeds: flaxseed, chia seeds, walnuts
- Talk to your doctor about your diet to see if you need to be taking any vitamins or supplements.

Keep a Good Thing Going

There are many challenges that women face when deciding to continue breastfeeding.

Some helpful things to know:

- Medical insurance **MUST** cover a breast pump. Ask your doctor for a prescription for a breast pump
- Section 4207 of the ACA requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide reasonable break time and a private, non-bathroom space for nursing mothers to express breast milk during the workday for up to one year after the child's birth
- Make an appointment with a lactation consultant if your milk supply is decreasing. Find one at www.uslca.org
- Go to La Leche League International <http://www.llli.org> for more breastfeeding information

References:

1. Pediatrics March 2012, 129 (3) e827-e841; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2011-3552>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>
3. Centers for Disease Control. Fourth National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals. 2009.
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3662288/#>
5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/eutils/elink.fcgi?dbfrom=pubmed&retmode=ref&cmd=prlinks&id=22853878>
6. Piccoli GB, Clari R, Vigotti FN, et al. Vegan-vegetarian diets in pregnancy: danger or panacea? A systematic narrative review. BJOG. 2015;122(5):623-33.
7. Baroni L, Goggi S, Battagliano R, et al. Vegan Nutrition for Mothers and Children: Practical Tools for Healthcare Providers. Nutrients. 2018;11(1)

