

## *Basic Breastfeeding Information*

### Nutrition:

In pregnancy, mothers are motivated to eat a healthy well balanced diet which should continue through the postpartum period while mom is breastfeeding. Moms should eat **three well balanced meals as well as nutritious snacks** every day. **500 extra calories** per day is recommended. The fat accumulation from pregnancy is also available as a ready supply of calories. Although it is emphasized to eat a healthy diet, milk production has been found to be adequate even if a mother's diet is suboptimal. However, when your diet is inadequate you may feel fatigued, listless and lose weight. After a few months, an inadequate diet may lead to a decrease in the quantity of milk produced. Food selections need to be made from all food groups. See the new food pyramid on [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for breastfeeding moms. If you find it difficult to fix nutritious meals, start the day with a good breakfast and then have nutritious foods available throughout the day. For example: hard-boiled eggs, chicken, cheese, peanut or soy butter, yogurt, seeds, whole-grain crackers, fruit, vegetables and whole-wheat bread. You do not need to eliminate any specific food from your diet, even spicy or gassy foods. The only foods that may be restricted are those that the baby is allergic to, since proteins can pass through to breast milk. Speak with your pediatrician if there is a family history of allergies.

A nursing mother is encouraged to **drink to thirst** to meet her own fluid requirements. One easy way to ensure adequate fluid intake is to have something to drink when you sit down to nurse your baby. Water, juice and milk are good choices; limit "empty calorie" fluids or caffeinated beverages.

*See Nutrition Handout.*

Caffeine: Moderation is best. This includes all caffeinated products. Coffee has the most caffeine. The allowed amount is 2 - 3 cups/day. (No more than 25 oz/day). Side effects from too much caffeine include hyperactivity, or wakefulness in the infant. Limiting caffeine may help. Decaffeinated products are safe to use.

Exercise: Regular exercise is healthy during lactation and does not interfere with milk supply. The taste of breast milk may change after strenuous exercise (exercising to exhaustion) due to the build up of lactic acid. Try to feed your baby before exercise so your breasts are less full as well as to avoid changes in taste. Wear a well supportive bra while you exercise.

Medication: Prescription and over-the-counter medications can pass through breast milk to your baby. Fortunately the amounts are minimal, depending on the medication. However, it is important to check with your doctor or pediatrician before taking **any medication**.

Alcohol: Alcohol passes into breast milk and affects the central nervous system of the mother and baby. These effects may include sedation, irritability, weak suck and decrease in milk supply. The baby's gross motor development may be delayed and is directly related to the quantity that the mother ingests. On special occasions a small glass of wine or beer is acceptable. The mother should breastfeed the baby prior to having an alcoholic drink; then wait 2 – 3 hours per drink before breastfeeding the baby again. *It is best to avoid.*

Tobacco: Cigarettes can lead to relatively high levels of fat-soluble nicotine in breast milk. It can decrease mother's milk secretion or inhibit letdown reflex if mother smokes immediately before nursing. Mothers who smoke need twice the normal intake of vitamin C because smoking affects the body's ability to utilize this vitamin. Exposing the baby to smoking can lead to increased illness (this is known as risks of passive smoking).

Hair Dye: Is okay in moderation every few months. It is suggested that the dye/color not be directly applied to scalp because there will be less exposure to the chemicals during breastfeeding.

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### Signs of Good Milk Intake:

- Breastfeeding at least 8-12 times/day. Baby may also cluster feed (short frequent feedings then a longer stretch to next feeding).
- Breasts let down (leak) in one breast while nursing on the other. (Not everyone leaks)
- Breasts feel full before nursing and softer after nursing. Mom feels a tugging on her nipple.
- Baby has good latch, sucks well and you can hear baby swallow, 1:1 ratio of sucking and swallowing.
- Healthy skin tone and color (baby).
- 6-8 wet diapers/day – pale yellow urine.
- Stools change from thick almost black to thinner brown to yellow, mustard seedy stools. (average 4/day)
- Regular intervals of wakefulness, sleep and feeding. Baby seems content between feeds.
- Fat increases in arms and legs.
- Adequate weight gain as per your pediatrician. Average is  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1 oz per day in the first several months.

### Growth Spurt - Increase in Nursing Frequency:

You may notice an increase in the frequency with which your baby nurses. All babies go through periods of sudden growth during their early months. These periods usually last only a few days. The most common periods are: first few days home; 10-14 days, 4-6 weeks, 3-6 months; other periods - time of illness, over stimulation, emotional upset, or physical discomfort.

### Nipple Care:

- No soap, creams or oils necessary. Normal showering.
- For sore nipples, Lasinoh and PureLan cream are safe to use. No need to remove cream prior to nursing baby.
- Any cracks or bleeding, please call an LC or other Health care professional.

### Correct positioning (this includes most common positions: cross cradle, football/upright and lying down):

- Mom should be in a comfortable position, using pillows to support mother's arms, back and lap. Elevate feet on a small stool.
- Baby should be positioned so baby can latch the areola. Make sure mom's fingers are not on the areola to prevent latching onto the nipple only. Align baby nose to nipple.
- Keep baby's head at breast level and do not lean over to reach baby.
- Infant should be close to mom so tip of baby's nose and chin touch the breast.
- Baby's mouth should be opened wide and positioned slightly below center of the breast. This will result in baby's lower lip covering more of the lower areola than the upper areola, asymmetrical latch.
- Baby's tongue should be flanged out and extend over his/her lower gum.
- Baby's ear, shoulder and hip should be in a straight line facing its mother, tummy to tummy.
- To release the baby's mouth from your breast, insert your finger between baby's lips to break the suction

### Mom Returning to Work

It is up to you when you return to work. Some women can wait until the baby is 3 or 4 months old. If you desire to coordinate work with breastfeeding, feel free to call our office about one month prior to returning to work so we can help you with this transition. Breastfeeding and working are possible!

### Parents Sleep

Although the birth of your baby is a joyful experience, it is also exhausting. The unrelenting needs of a newborn leave you short-changed on sleep. Take naps and eat well-balanced meals. Keep company to a minimum for awhile and relax housekeeping standards temporarily. Have friends and family help you during this time.