

## Healthy eating when breastfeeding

If you're breastfeeding, your baby gets all of their nourishment from you, so it's important to maintain the healthy eating habits you developed during pregnancy. Motherhood can be demanding and tiring, especially during the early days, so eating the right foods will provide you with much needed energy and nutrients.

### Take time to eat healthily

Looking after yourself is as important as looking after your baby. Making time to eat healthy, energy and nutrient-filled meals will help you to keep going. Carbohydrates such as wholemeal bread, cereals, pasta and potatoes provide long lasting energy and should make up a large part of your diet. Fruit and vegetables will provide you both with essential vitamins, minerals and fibre. You can get protein - vital for your baby's growth and development - from meat, pulses, fish and eggs but stick to moderate quantities and choose leaner meats. Calcium rich foods such as semi-skimmed milk, cheese and yogurt are key, too.

Foods with a high fat or sugar content are high in calories and often pretty low in nutritional value, so are best avoided or just keeping as an occasional treat. If you're on the go or don't have time to cook, a handful of sunflower or pumpkin seeds, a wholemeal sandwich filled with lean meat, tuna, cheese, salad or Marmite, or a bowl of high-fibre, fortified cereal with milk, yoghurt and fruit are easy, healthier snacks.

### The breastfeeding diet

If you're breastfeeding, all the energy your baby needs will come from you which means you'll need a few more calories than usual. While some of these calories will come from the fat stores you laid down during pregnancy, the rest should come from your diet.

There's no set amount of extra calories that you'll need - it depends on how much energy you've stored in pregnancy, how much your baby is feeding and the amount of physical activity you do. In most cases you will probably spend more time resting than you would normally, which saves energy for breastfeeding. The best advice is to eat when you feel hungry, which may be little and often, and stick to healthy, nutritious snacks if you're peckish between meals.

Whilst breastfeeding, it's important to make sure you're drinking plenty of water. You'll need about 2 litres a day as it's essential to the production of breastmilk. You might find you feel quite thirsty while nursing so drink whenever you feel the need. Many mums find keeping a large bottle of water handy can help. An indication that you're not getting enough fluids is if your urine seems very dark or has a stronger smell than normal. Remember, milk and unsweetened fruit juice are also good options for keeping you hydrated,

It's advisable to avoid alcohol when you're breastfeeding as it can pass from your blood into your breastmilk and on to your breastfeeding baby. Although you can still enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, keep an eye on your caffeine intake as too much can cause over-stimulation in your baby. Some women report that certain strong flavoured or spicy foods upset their babies. If your baby is unsettled after a feed, cries a lot, or has difficulty sleeping it's a good idea to make a note of what you're eating and see

if you can find a trigger. If you pinpoint a particular food, try avoiding it and see if things improve. And if you have a specific concern, speak to your health visitor or doctor.

If there's anything you're unsure of regarding your diet at this stage, call the Aptamil team for expert advice on **08457 623 628**, Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm or go online to try out our one-to-one instant service, Live Chat, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.