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Bump, Baby and Beyond

Eating Well as a New Mum

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Eating well as a new mum

It is really important that you eat well to ensure that you have the energy and strength to look after your new baby.

The importance of eating well

- Eating well is important for you. It will help you recover from the birth and give you the energy to care for your new baby
- Eating well is important for your family. As a mum, you will influence your family's diet. If you eat well, it will help encourage everybody else to eat well too

Further information

For examples of simple, cheap and healthy snacks you can make visit:

www.firststepsnutrition.org

Tips for eating well with a new baby

- Make sure you eat and drink regularly throughout the day. It can be easy to skip meals when you have a new baby to look after, but you need energy and nutrients for the demands of parenting and to stay well yourself
- Carry on with the same healthy diet you had in pregnancy. There is no need to stop now that baby has arrived and you will soon have a family to feed so you will want to carry on those good habits
- If you are worried about how much weight you gained in pregnancy and how you might get back to a weight you are comfortable with, talk to your midwife or health visitor. They can advise you on where to get support and advice in your area
- If you are finding it hard to make meals, then nutritious snacks can be just as good

Breastfeeding mums

If you are breastfeeding your baby you will need extra energy and extra fluids, here are some examples of healthy snacks:

- A glass of milk
- Fruit
- A bowl of milky porridge with banana and chopped nuts
- A bowl of yoghurt and fruit
- Hot chocolate
- Slices of toast with peanut butter
- An egg sandwich and some chilled water or a small glass of pure fruit juice unsweetened

Further information

On eating well for breastfeeding mums visit:

www.firststepsnutrition.org

Don't forget:
Keep taking your Healthy Start vitamins from pregnancy, or take a separate vitamin D supplement. Talk to your health visitor or midwife about suitable supplements.

Alcohol and breastfeeding

It's probably sensible to drink very little while breastfeeding and no more than one or two units once or twice a week. This is because alcohol passes through to breastfed babies in very small amounts. It's unlikely that having an occasional drink will harm you or your baby, but it might affect how easily your baby feeds. If you intend to drink more than this on a special occasion, you might want to think about expressing milk in advance for your babysitter.

If you have had a lot to drink and you need to express your milk because your breasts feel full, this milk will contain alcohol and so should be thrown away. Once you feel sober again it is okay to feed your baby. However, if you have had a lot to drink it is hard to be as aware of your baby's needs as usual.

One unit of alcohol is approximately a single (25ml) measure of spirits, half a pint of beer or half a standard (175ml) glass of wine, although it depends on the strength of the drink.

Further information

On alcohol and breastfeeding visit:

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Your questions:

Is there anything I should avoid eating and drinking when I am breastfeeding?

You can eat and drink the same healthy food as the rest of the family when you are breastfeeding, but there are a few things to watch out for:

- Your baby could become unsettled if you drink a lot of coffee and tea with caffeine in them. Try switching to decaffeinated versions if you think your baby is sensitive to caffeine in your breastmilk
- You can eat oil-rich fish like salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, kippers, sardines, whitebait and pilchards, but only have these fish twice a week

What if my baby shows signs of allergic response to what I eat?

If you are worried that your baby is showing an allergic response (for example by being very unsettled after feeds, being sick, crying too much or having a rash), then talk to your GP or midwife. In rare circumstances babies can be allergic to cows' milk protein and mums might need to avoid dairy products themselves when breastfeeding. If so mum may need a calcium supplement; your GP can arrange for you to see a dietitian.

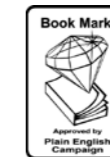
Will foods like onions, garlic and spicy curries upset my baby?

Eating ordinary foods will not affect your breastfeeding baby, especially if they are foods you have always eaten and ate when you were pregnant.

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