



# Nutrition and Lactation

Client Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dietitian \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## ***What is this diet?***

Many women worry about providing the best nutrition for their baby. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for babies. It has all the nutrients essential for your baby's growth and development. It includes health, nutritional, immunologic, developmental, psychological, social, economic, and environmental benefits.

## ***What Should I be Eating?***

Women who eat a variety of foods receive essential nutrients to make breast milk with all the vitamins and minerals needed. Usually, no special diet or foods are needed. Women should consume a variety of:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Grains and Breads (preferably whole grains)
- Dairy foods
- Lean meats and legumes
- Moderate amounts of fats
- Drink adequate amount of fluid (8-10 cups each day) or 1 cup fluid after breastfeeding or pumping. All fluids are included except caffeine containing drinks.

You may notice that some foods (spicy foods, onions, legumes or beans) may make your baby gassy or irritable. Too much caffeine may cause problems such as sleeping, eating, and irritability. You do not have to omit these foods from your diet; however a reduced amount and eating after nursing may help your baby feel more comfortable.

Babies who get only breast milk, may not be getting enough Vitamin D. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends these infants receive a Vitamin D supplement or infant multivitamin containing vitamin D. They may also need a fluoride supplement if their water is not fluoridated and an iron supplement before their first birthday. Check with your doctor or dietitian.

Breastfeeding requires an average of 200-500 extra calories per day. If you are trying to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight, you do not need to add the additional 200-500 calories per day. Watch your portion sizes and avoid foods high in fat. A diet too low in calories will not change the composition of the breast milk, but it will affect the amount of milk produced. A safe amount for weight loss is 1/2 to 1 pound per week. Again, a healthy diet composed of a variety of foods is recommended.

**What about fish?** Fish is a good source of the essential fatty acid omega-3 (EPA and DHA). EPA and DHA are important in baby brain and eye development. Unfortunately, fish can also be a source of mercury and other contaminants. With a few exceptions, the benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks associated with contamination. Pregnant and lactating women should limit total intake of seafood to 12 oz/week while completely avoiding high mercury fish such as shark, king mackerel, tilefish, and swordfish.

### ***Benefits of Breastfeeding***

For your baby:

- Breastfed babies receive antibodies in the milk that help fight infections and reduce the incidence of certain diseases
- Breastfed babies have fewer food allergies
- Breastfed babies have fewer dental caries
- Breastfed babies have a decreased risk for obesity
- Breastfeeding helps with proper mouth, jaw, teeth, and speech development
- Decreased risk of contamination when preparing formula

For the mother:

- Decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Increased bonding with your baby
- May help achieve pre-pregnancy weight
- Save money

### ***Who Shouldn't Breastfeed?***

There may be certain conditions where breastfeeding is not encouraged:

- If the mother has HIV or AIDS (in the United States)
- If the baby has galactosemia
- Certain medications or illegal drugs can be transferred in breast milk
- If the mother has untreated active tuberculosis

\*\*Ask your doctor if it is appropriate for you to breastfeed.

\*\* See <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/index.cfm?page=235> for further information.