

# BREAST IS BEST FOR BABY, BUT WHAT IS BEST FOR ME?

Healthy eating is an important part of caring for yourself and your growing baby. It gives you the energy needed to tackle all the new tasks ahead.

When breastfeeding, your need for food and other nutrients is higher.

If you don't eat well, your breast milk will still contain the nutrients your baby needs, but you may feel tired and rundown.



**Use the handout "How well are you Eating?" to check your intake.**

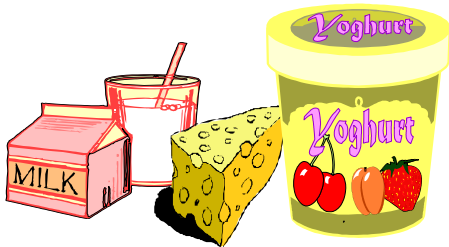
## So how much do you need?

### Calcium

Dairy foods are the main food sources of calcium. Aim for at least 3 - 4 serves of dairy foods each day.

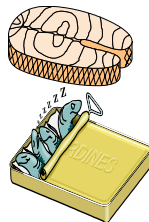
1 serve =

- ◆ 35 g cheese (matchbox size)
- ◆ 250 ml milk (1 cup)
- ◆ 200 g tub of yoghurt



**Low fat milk and yoghurt have higher calcium contents than other varieties.**

- ◆ Calcium is also found in sardines/salmon with bones and small amounts are in wholemeal breads, cereals and sesame seeds.



Too little calcium in your diet may increase your risk of osteoporosis (thinning of bones) later in life.

**Try and avoid high intakes of caffeine containing drinks, (eg tea, coffee and cola) alcohol and salt as this reduces calcium uptake.**

### Protein and Iron

Include 1-2 serves a day of lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts and legumes (eg baked beans, lentils) to meet your protein and iron needs.

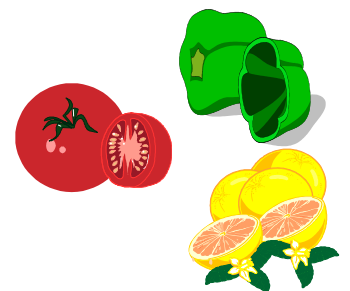
#### To boost iron intake try to -

Combine meat with bread, cereals and rice (wholegrain are best sources).

Include foods high in Vitamin C with meat to enhance iron uptake.

Vitamin C rich foods -

- ◆ beans
- ◆ broccoli
- ◆ tomato
- ◆ capsicum
- ◆ citrus fruits & juices



Combine foods high in Vitamin C with bread, breakfast cereal, pasta and rice-

- ◆ orange juice with breakfast cereal
- ◆ tomato sandwich
- ◆ capsicum in stir fry rice



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## Fluid

### Drink plenty of water.

It is a good idea to have a glass of water every time you breastfeed.

Drinking about 2-3 cups tea, coffee, or cola drinks a day, should have little effect on your baby.

If you drink tea, coffee or cola drinks it is best to have these straight after a breastfeed to reduce the amount your baby is receiving.

Alcohol is best kept to social occasions in small amounts.



**Both caffeine and alcohol pass into breast milk.**



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## Returning to your previous weight

It is normal to put on at least 4kg of extra body fat during pregnancy.

Breastfeeding along with healthy eating and enjoyable activity can help you return to your natural body weight. The suggestions below provide some helpful ideas to healthy eating and feeling good about your body:

- ◆ Avoid “crash diets”. For breastfeeding mums it can affect the quality and quantity of breast milk, not to mention the physical and emotional effects it can have on your body.
- ◆ Eat a variety of foods, with moderation of all foods.
- ◆ Eat regular meals, ideally including breakfast and snacks. Eat to appetite - eat when hungry and stop when full.
- ◆ Reduce intake of fatty foods.
- ◆ Do not judge yourself on your weight. Use other measures besides body weight to determine success e.g. more energy, well being, fitness, sleep better.
- ◆ Eating well and exercising regularly is an important part of respecting and caring for our bodies and health. Don't put unrealistic expectations on yourself.

**Calorie restricted diets are to be avoided.**

## Losing too much weight

Some mothers lose more weight than they really want to.

Try and include 2-3 nourishing snacks between meals. Examples include: a sandwich with fruit and a glass of milk; or biscuits and cheese with a fruit smoothie, or breakfast cereal with milk and yoghurt.