



BREAST FEEDING

This handout was written to answer some of the questions most often asked by breast-feeding mothers. Feel free to ask the doctor or nurse practitioner to go over any information you do not understand.

DO I NEED TO EAT ANY SPECIAL FOODS WHILE BREAST FEEDING MY BABY?

Eating a healthy diet will make you feel better. Breast-feeding uses up many calories, so you may have an increase in appetite. A healthy, well-balanced diet should be eaten. Be sure to eat plenty of meat, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, citrus fruits, green and yellow vegetables, whole grain cereal and bread products, and few fatty foods and sweets.

| <u>Food Groups</u> | <u>Suggested Daily Servings</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Meat and meat substitutes | 3 |
| Fruits | 4 |
| Vegetables | 4 |
| Breads and cereals, grain | 4 |
| Milk and dairy products | 4 |
| Other, fried and sweet foods | 0-2 |

SHOULD I AVOID ANY FOODS?

Most foods that were eaten during pregnancy can be tolerated by mother and baby while nursing. There is no reason to avoid garlic, curry, cabbage, onions or any other nourishing food. If a food consistently seems to bother you or your baby, you can stop eating it to see if relief occurs. Caffeine (in coffee, tea, soft drinks and chocolate) may cause the baby to be fussy. If this happens, use decaffeinated coffees, teas or soft drinks and eat chocolate in moderation. An increased amount of cow's milk in your diet may also cause the baby to be fussy. You do not have to drink milk to make milk but you should discuss with your doctor about taking a calcium supplement.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I DO WHILE BREAST FEEDING MY BABY?

While you are breast-feeding, you need to drink plenty of fluids. Try to drink seven-10 eight ounce glasses of fluids each day. (Drink enough to keep your urine pale.) You may want to have a glass of cold water or juice while you are nursing your baby.

Avoid hot drinks while your baby is at the breast. Hot drinks could spill and burn your baby.

It is also important to rest as much as you can. Try to take a nap or rest when your baby is sleeping every day.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BREAST FEED MY BABY?

Newborn babies have very small stomachs and breast milk digests quickly and easily so your baby will need to eat frequently. It is best to breast feed your baby on demand or whenever your baby seems hungry. Between one and one half to three hours after feeding, your baby will have an empty stomach. The baby may act restless because an empty stomach will be uncomfortable. You may see the baby sucking or moving about in the crib with her or his eyes closed. This would be a good time to offer your baby the breast. You may expect to offer the breast eight or more times in 24 hours. If your baby needs to eat on a regular schedule, your doctor or nurse will tell you this. Signs of adequate intake are weight gain, three or more stools per day and more than six wet diapers per day.

HOW LONG SHOULD A FEEDING LAST?

Length of time and amount of feeding is different for every baby. Let your baby nurse until satisfied. Listen for swallowing. Your baby should have a least 20 minutes of swallowing time at each feeding. Let your baby release the first breast when done. Burp your baby and offer the second breast if baby still seems hungry. Most milk is emptied from your breast within 5-8 minutes.

SHOULD I WAKE MY BABY TO FEED?

During the day, you may want to wake your baby if he or she sleeps three or more hours from the beginning of the last feeding. Frequent daytime feedings may help your baby to sleep longer at night. Check with your baby's doctor to see when it is okay to let your baby sleep through one feeding at night (usually if you have fed him or her at least eight times before bedtime).

SHOULD I GIVE MY BABY WATER?

Your milk contains a lot of water, so your newborn does not need water. Giving water to your new baby may reduce nursing time and reduce your milk supply.

WILL MY DRINKING ALCOHOL HURT MY BABY?

An occasional drink is considered safe but daily alcohol use may cause your baby to be drowsy, weak, uncoordinated and to grow poorly. If you have more than two alcoholic drinks, you should pump your milk (through two feedings) and throw it away for six to eight hours. Feed your baby formula (or milk that you have previously pumped) instead during that six to eight hour period.

WILL MY SMOKING CIGARETTES HURT MY BABY?

Your baby may be burned or even blinded by a lit cigarette or cigarette ash if you or anyone else smokes while holding your baby. Cigarette smoking during breast-feeding may decrease your milk supply. Breathing cigarette smoke may cause your baby to have more colds and other health problems. There appears to be an increased risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) in babies whose parents smoke. You should not take your baby into smoke-filled rooms or allow people to smoke near your baby. It is best for you and your baby if you can quit smoking. If you cannot quit it is still better for your baby's health to breastfeed. Discuss with your healthcare provider ways to reduce your baby's nicotine exposure.

WILL DRUGS/MEDICINES THAT I TAKE HURT MY BABY?

Many drugs or medicines that the breast-feeding mother takes go through to her milk. A few drugs may be very harmful to the baby. Be sure to tell your doctor that you are nursing your baby, pumping milk for your baby or planning to nurse your baby when he or she prescribe medicines for you. If you are already taking a medicine, be sure to check with your doctor or your baby's doctor to see if the medicine is safe for your baby. (Most prescribed drugs a mother needs are safe for breast-feeding). Do not take any medicines that you can buy without a prescription (over the counter medicines) without first checking with your doctor or your baby's doctor. This includes medicines you may take for a cold. Be sure to tell the doctor that you are a nursing mother. Usually, the doctor can prescribe or suggest a medicine to help you that is safe for your baby. Sometimes, breast-feeding must be stopped if the medicine that you need is harmful to your baby. You may need to pump and throw out your milk while you are on the medicine. This keeps up your milk supply and helps you avoid getting uncomfortably full. Your doctor will tell you when the medicine is no longer in your breast milk.

STREET DRUGS OR “RECREATIONAL” DRUGS

You should not take any drug or medicine sold on the street if you are nursing your baby. Not only are the drugs harmful to you and your baby, but these drugs are often mixed with other drugs and even poisons. Some of the drugs and their effects on nursing babies are listed below:

1. Amphetamines (speed, diet pills, ice, bennies, ups) - causes the baby to be irritable and to eat and sleep poorly.
2. Cocaine (crack, rock, coke, toot, blow, snow, freebase) - causes a fast heart rate, high blood pressure, dilated (large) pupils, vomiting, diarrhea, possible seizures and fussiness in the baby.
3. Darvon - causes the baby to be drowsy and eat poorly.
4. Depressants (barbs, blue birds, ludes, tranquilizers, downs) - causes the baby to be drowsy and eat poorly.
5. Heroin (H, junk, smack, china, white, black tar) - causes addiction. Withdrawal causes stomach cramps, diarrhea and sometimes seizures in the baby.
6. Librium - causes yellowish colored skin, listlessness and temperature problems in the baby.
7. LSD (acid, blotter acid, windowpane, named after pictures on paper) - causes birth defects in the baby or baby's children.
8. Marijuana (dope, weed, herb, grass, pot, hashish, hash) - may cause changes in the baby's brain.
9. Methadone (dolly) - causes the baby to be sleepy and gain weight poorly. Withdrawal is similar to heroin withdrawal.
10. PCP (angel dust, crystal, teal, THC) - is concentrated in the breast milk - may cause baby to be cranky, twitchy and hard to comfort. May cause changes in the baby's brain.
11. Valium - causes the baby to be drowsy and listless, to lose weight or gain weight poorly.

The information contained in this handout is for general information only and should not be considered complete. For additional information on breast-feeding your baby, please ask your doctor and/or lactation consultant.

Additional information and resources are available in the Family Resource Center at Dayton Children's. The center is open Monday 9:00 am - 8:00 pm; Tuesday - Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm; and Saturday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm. Call 937-641-3700 for more information.

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