

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NUTRITION DURING BREASTFEEDING

Good nutrition promotes the mother’s recovery from giving birth, her ability to cope with motherhood, and successful breastfeeding. A good diet for breastfeeding can be put together using most of the same principles as diets recommended for the whole family. The mother’s diet affects the amount of water-soluble vitamins B and C and the quality of fat in breast milk in particular. Breastfeeding mothers also need more energy, vitamins and minerals. In order to prevent food allergies in the baby, it is important that the mother’s diet is as balanced as possible and that no food product is avoided just in case. Through breast milk, the baby is exposed to appropriate amounts of various foods, and breast milk also helps build up the baby’s defence mechanisms.

The additional energy required during breastfeeding is approximately 2,0 MJ (500 kcal) per day. This amount of calories can be obtained in a healthy way by eating for example two potatoes, one fruit, two slices of bread, a portion of salad and one glass of milk. The extra food also increases the intake of vitamins and minerals. When the baby starts eating solid food at around six months, the mother will secrete less breast milk and will consequently require less additional energy.

Breastfeeding increases the need for fluids, so it is advisable to drink whenever you feel thirsty. Suitable drinks include water, skimmed milk and sour milk, tea and low-sugar, diluted juice. Only moderate amounts of coffee are advised. Consuming large amounts coffee/caffeine can make your baby restless, as some of the consumed caffeine will end up in your breast milk. If you feel thirsty during the night, water is the best choice, since the buffering effect of saliva is decreased in night time and teeth are more vulnerable to cavities. When the mother uses xylitol daily, it also protects the baby’s teeth from caries.

Food product	Recommendation	To consider
Nutrition fats	Use 1 to 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil as salad dressing or in cooking daily and 6 to 8 teaspoon of vegetable margarine (60–80%) on bread. This ensures the intake of unsaturated fats and essential fatty acids. See also section “Fish” below. Essential fatty acids are required for the development of the baby’s nervous system, vision and immune system, among other things.	The fat content of a meal consumed by the mother can be detected in her breast milk only a few hours after ingestion. When the mother uses unsaturated fats and receives essential fatty acids from nutrition, there are also plenty of them in breast milk. During the first few months following birth, the baby’s ability to produce fatty acids remains undeveloped.
Fish	2–3 meals containing fish per week, switching between freshwater fish, farmed fish, and marine fish; e.g. vendace, whitefish, saithe, rainbow trout, Arctic char and brown trout. Large herring over 17 cm long (length when uncleaned and ungutted) and salmon or trout caught in the Baltic Sea should only be consumed 1–2 times per month. Those who consume freshwater fish daily, are advised to decrease their intake of certain predatory fish known to contain high levels of mercury, such as large sized perch, zander and burbot. Pike should be avoided altogether	Fish is rich in long-chain fatty acids (DHA and EPA) and various vitamins and nutrients, such as Vitamin D, iodine and protein. Contains high levels of dioxin and PCB. Contains high levels of mercury.

Alcohol	The consumption of alcohol should be avoided.	The amount of alcohol that makes it into the mother's bloodstream also make it into her breast milk. Correspondingly, alcohol also leaves breast milk at the same pace as it leaves the mother's bloodstream.
Coffee and other drinks that contain caffeine, such as cola and energy drinks	The intake of caffeine should be limited to 200 mg/day. This amount is equivalent to two 1.5 dl cups of filtered coffee, one 1.5 dl cup of espresso or 1 l of black tea.	Caffeine ends up in breast milk and is therefore also consumed by the baby. There is only a limited amount of data based on which a safe caffeine intake for children could be determined.
Cola drinks containing caffeine	Take note of the caffeine content of these products. One can (3.3 dl) of a cola drink contains approximately 25–60 mg of caffeine while a small bottle (5 dl) contains approx 35–90 mg.	See above. The packages of all products containing more than 150 mg/l of caffeine must include the following warning: "High Caffeine Content – Not Recommended During Pregnancy or Lactation"
Energy drinks	Take note of the caffeine content of these products. One can (2.5 dl) of an energy drink contains approximately 80 mg of caffeine while a small bottle (5 dl) contains approx 160 mg.	See above.
Other products containing caffeine	A caffeine warning and details concerning the product's caffeine content must be printed on product packaging.	See above.
Herbal tea drinks	Not recommended.	Safety unknown, may contain harmful natural substances.
Herbal supplements	Not recommended.	Safety unknown, may contain harmful natural substances.
Seaweed products	Should be avoided if iodine content is high or unknown.	Excessive iodine intake impairs the functioning of the thyroid gland.
Seeds from oil plants (e.g. flaxseeds, pine nuts, chia seeds, hemp seeds, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, poppy seeds and sunflower seeds)	Whole, crushed or soaked oilseeds should not be used for e.g. to treat constipation. Small amounts of oilseeds, in for example bread are not harmful.	Oilseed crops have a natural tendency to accumulate heavy metals from the soil in their seeds, especially nickel and cadmium.
Apricot kernels	Maximum 3 pieces of small kernels (total 0,37 g) per day.	Contain natural toxin (amygdalin). Amygdalin converts to cyanide in the intestine and poses a risk of cyanide poisoning.
False morel (Gyromitra esculenta)	Not recommended.	Contain traces of gyromitrin even after processing.

Nutrient	Recommendation	To consider
Vitamin D	For the mother: vitamin D supplement 10 µg per day year-round.	For the baby: vitamin D supplement 10 µg per day from two weeks old.
Calcium	<p>The recommended intake is 900 mg per day.</p> <p>The recommended daily intake can be obtained by drinking 5–6 dl of liquid dairy products and eating 2–3 slices of cheese or 100 g of hard, low-fat cheese, or by taking a calcium supplement.</p>	<p>Calcium supplements should be taken based on a specific personal assessment as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 500 mg if the person consumes very few dairy products or other products containing calcium - 1000 mg if the person does not consume any dairy products or other products containing calcium
Iodine	<p>150 µg/day, if very little iodine-containing food is consumed.</p> <p>Foods which contain substantial amounts of iodine include dairy products, fish, eggs and iodised table salt.</p>	<p>Most pregnancy and breastfeeding multivitamin supplement tablets contain 100-175 µg of iodine.</p> <p>The safe maximum intake of iodine is 600 µg/day.</p>
Multivitamin and multimineral supplements	Multivitamin supplements are recommended only when the mother's diet is unbalanced, she is providing breast milk to babies other than her own, she is breastfeeding twins or when a new pregnancy occurs immediately after the previous one.	

Source:

Syödään yhdessä – ruokasuositukset lapsiperheille. 2016. National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) The National Nutrition Council (www.julkari.fi/handle/10024/129744)

Evira – Pregnant and breastfeeding mother (www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/healthy-diet/nutrition-recommendations-for-all/pregnant-and-breastfeeding-mothers/)

Evira – General instructions on safe use of foodstuffs (www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/information-on-food/food-hazards/restriction-on-the-use-of-foodstuffs)