

Nutrition to Support Lactation

Nutrition during lactation is essential for both parent and baby, as it supports milk production and promotes optimal growth and development.



General Nutrition Tips

- **Eat a variety of nutritious foods:** Your body requires additional food and energy to support breastfeeding/chestfeeding and milk production. Try to consume a variety of foods to support your needs.
- **Protein:** Protein is crucial for breastmilk/chestmilk production and is passed to the baby to help nourish and support growth. Foods high in protein include lean meats, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds.
- **Fluids:** During lactation, you require more fluids to replace losses. Aim for about 3 litres or 12 cups of fluid each day. This doesn't have to be just water, all beverages and even some foods such as fruits, vegetables and soups contribute to your total fluid intake.
- **Caffeine:** Limit amount of caffeine to no more than 300mg/day (~2 cups of coffee or 5-6 cups of tea) as this passes into human milk and can cause irritability and sleep problems in babies if consuming very large amounts.
- **Artificial Sweeteners:** If using artificial sweeteners or artificially sweetened foods, do so in moderation. Talk to your healthcare provider about artificial sweeteners that are safe for consumption.
- **Fish/Seafood:** Seafood is a good source of protein and omega-3s but may contain mercury, which can harm a baby's developing nervous system. To reduce exposure, limit fish like fresh/frozen tuna, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish.
- **Multivitamins:** Continue taking a multivitamin with folic acid, vitamin D and vitamin B12.
- **Herbal teas:** Some herbal teas are generally considered safe in small amounts (2 to 3 cups a day), while others may not be safe or don't have research to support their safety. If you're trying to build your milk supply, it's best to avoid herbs like sage, as well as peppermint, jasmine, and chasteberry.

Foods That May Help Support Milk Production

Galactagogues, including foods, herbs, and medications, may help boost milk production to some extent. While evidence is limited, many of these ingredients have been used culturally for generations to support breastfeeding/chestfeeding. A proper latch and effective milk removal remain crucial for a strong milk supply. Incorporating galactagogues into a balanced diet may encourage your body's natural milk production. If you have concerns about your milk supply, consult a breastfeeding/chestfeeding professional for support.

Vegetables: beetroot, carrots, yam, sweet potato, lettuce, spinach, green onion

Fruits: dates, figs, apricots, papaya

Unsaturated fats: olive oil, flaxseed oil, sesame oil

Grains: barley, oats, quinoa, rice, millet, buckwheat

Nuts and seeds: almonds, sunflower, sesame seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, flaxseed

Legumes: chickpeas, lentils, green beans, kidney, black or white beans

Herbs and spices: marjoram, basil, pepper, fennel, dill, caraway, cumin, dandelion, fenugreek, alfalfa

Caring for a newborn baby can be very busy! Here are some simple tips to have meals and snacks readily available.

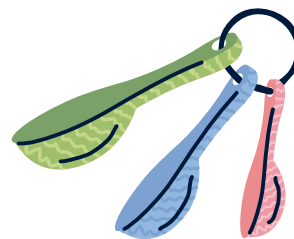
- Keep it simple, plan to have simple ingredients and snacks on hand
- Plan meals in advance
- Use time saving appliances such as a slow cooker, instant pot or air fryer
- Make larger batches of food to freeze or have for leftovers
- Ask friends/family for support

Snack Ideas

Nutrition and energy needs for those who are lactating are generally higher. You may need an extra 350-400 calories per day. This may look like eating slightly more at meals or having a few extra snacks throughout the day. Some easy nutritious snack examples include:

- Hardboiled eggs with whole grain crackers and carrot sticks
- Hummus with pepper slices and whole wheat pita
- Plain Greek yogurt with pumpkin seeds and berries.
- Whole grain bread toasted with nut butter and banana
- Bowl of oatmeal made with milk or plant-based beverage and unsweetened applesauce

Try these easy to make recipes that contain ingredients which may help to increase milk supply!



Baked Blueberry and Banana Oatmeal

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups oats
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 cup milk
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tbsp butter, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 2-3 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 cup blueberries (or other berries), fresh or frozen

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375F and grease a square baking dish.
2. In a medium size bowl, mash the bananas
3. Mix in the milk, vanilla, eggs, maple syrup, and butter. Add in blueberries and mix until dispersed.
4. In another medium size bowl, mix together oats, cinnamon and baking powder.
5. Combine wet and dry ingredients and stir until just mixed. Pour into greased baking dish.
6. Bake at 375 degrees F for 30 minutes or until edges are golden brown.

Fruit and Vegetable Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 banana
- 1 cup white milk (or fortified plain soy milk)
- 1 cup frozen fruit (try berries or mango or others)
- ½ cup yogurt
- 1 cup lightly packed spinach

Instructions

1. Start by adding the milk to the blender, then add the remaining ingredients.
2. Blend on high until smooth, stopping to scrape the sides if needed. This should take about 30 seconds.

White Bean and Spinach Quesadilla

Ingredients

- 1 15oz. can cannellini / white beans
- 3/4 tsp chili powder
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 4 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 4 8-inch flour tortillas

Instructions

1. Rinse and drain the cannellini beans well. Once well drained, transfer them to a food processor and add all of the remaining ingredients, except the tortillas. Blend until smooth.
2. Divide the bean mixture between the tortillas, then fold them in half to close.
3. Cook the quesadillas, one or two at a time, in a skillet over medium heat until the tortillas are brown and crispy and the filling is melted and gooey (3-5 minutes each side).
4. Cut the quesadillas, then serve.

Homemade Granola

Ingredients

- 4 cups rolled oats
- 1 ½ cups raw nuts and/or seeds (e.g. almonds, pecans, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, etc.)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup melted coconut oil or olive oil
- ½ cup maple syrup or honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¾ cup dried fruit, chopped if large (e.g. dried apricots, dates, figs, cranberries, etc.)
- Optional additional mix-ins: ½ cup chocolate chips or coconut flakes

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats, nuts/seeds, salt and cinnamon. Stir to blend.
3. Pour in the oil, maple syrup/honey and vanilla and mix well. Pour the granola onto your prepared pan and use a large spoon to spread it in an even layer.
4. Bake until lightly golden, about 20 to 25 minutes, stirring halfway. The granola will further crisp up as it cools.
5. Let the granola cool completely, undisturbed (at least 45 minutes). Top with the dried fruit (and optional chocolate chips, if using). Break the granola into pieces with your hands if you want to retain big chunks, or stir it around with a spoon if you don't want extra-clumpy granola.
6. Store the granola in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 to 2 weeks, or in a sealed freezer bag in the freezer for up to 3 months.