



Nutrition when breastfeeding

(Alimentazione in
allattamento)

**FOOD TIPS DEDICATED TO THE LACTATING
MOTHER**



Milk production is a process with a significant energy cost. The body copes with this in part by drawing on reserves accumulated during pregnancy. Daily nutrition should be balanced, in order to meet the increased need.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

(Indicazioni generali)

In general, nutritional recommendations for a lactating mother are those (valid for all) based on a balanced and varied intake of all nutrients:

- organise the eating day into three main meals and two or three structured snacks, never skip meals;
- combine complex carbohydrates, animal and plant proteins, fibres, vitamins and minerals in each meal, all seasoned with a good-quality oil;
- eat two to three servings a day of fresh fruits and seasonal vegetables;
- consume carbohydrates in the form of bread, pasta, potatoes, polenta, cereals in every meal;
- take protein four to five times a week, alternating vegetable sources (legumes) with animal sources (fish, meat, eggs, cheese ...);
- eat fish at least two to three times a week, preferring small blue fish (anchovies, sardines, mackerel) as they present lower risk of contaminants such as mercury;
- favour vegetable fats (extra-virgin olive oil) over animal fats (butter, lard).



ADJUST PORTIONS

(Adeguare le porzioni)

To adjust the diet, it is usually sufficient to increase the portions of the main meals and include a small additional snack (a pot of yogurt, a handful of nuts or seeds...). The following are suggested daily increments for the first six months of exclusive breastfeeding. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that every mother has different needs and therefore specific supplementation needs.

- +50g of pasta, rice or other grains or +60g of bread;
- +30g of meat or +50g of fish or +50g of legumes;
- +125g of whole yogurt or +150mLs of milk;
- +20g of dried fruit and an additional serving of fresh fruit.

Source: *Healthy Eating Guidelines (Linee guida per la sana alimentazione) and LARN 2014*

VARYING IS GOOD

(Variare è positivo)

Breastfeeding influences taste learning in the infant: the more varied the mother's diet, the more varied the aromas and tastes of breast milk will be.

There is no scientific evidence to eliminate foods such as garlic, onion, spices, brassicaceae (broccoli, cauliflower,

etc.): expanding the flavours of milk will make it easier to approach solid foods when the time comes.

Some foods excluded in pregnancy due to the risk of food toxic infection (e.g., cold cuts and raw meat) can be reintegrated into the diet.

HYDRATION IS IMPORTANT

(L'idratazione è importante)

What determines the amount of milk production is not the amount or type of fluids taken but the baby's sucking. However, breastfeeding results in increased fluid loss: adequate daily hydration (two to three liters) must therefore be ensured through water-rich foods and preferably unsweetened drinks.

SUPPLEMENTING-NUTRIENTS

(Integrare i nutrienti)

In pregnancy and during lactation, the human body increases the absorption and decreases the elimination of some nutrients. In cases of previous established deficiency and prolonged breastfeeding, it may be helpful to take vitamins (C, B12, D...) and other nutrients (iron, zinc, selenium...).



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

(L'attività fisica)

A healthy and active lifestyle helps the body and mood. Walking outdoors or exercising at home is recommended. You can participate in exercise classes or sports activities for new mothers.

STIMULATING LACTATION

(Stimolare la lattazione)

There are many products on the market that promise to increase milk secretion. Actually, the mother's rest and serenity, and regular breastfeeding according to the infant's demands are the elements that stimulate lactation more than any other.

SPECIFIC NEEDS

(Bisogni specifici)

In some cases, it is advisable to consult your doctor or an experienced dietitian to customize your diet. E.g., if you were overweight or obese in the pre-pregnancy stage, or if you are a young adolescent mom who is breastfeeding, or even in the case of a twin pregnancy, or if you are a vegetarian or vegan.

HABITS TO AVOID

(Abitudini da evitare)

While diet can positively change the composition of milk, it is equally true that some choices can have a negative impact, and therefore should be avoided:

- caffeine and theine can cause irritability in the infant, so it is advisable to limit coffee intake to a maximum of two to three cups per day. In addition to coffee, the intake of other stimulating drinks such as tea, cola or chocolate drinks, and energy drinks should also be limited;
- smoking should be avoided altogether: nicotine reduces the volume of milk produced, inhibits its release, can cause irritability and reduction in infant weight.
- avoid alcoholic beverages in any form: alcohol has a high capacity to pass into milk with negative repercussions on the amount of milk produced and, according to some studies, also on the cognitive development of children at 6-7 years of age. In the case of alcohol intake, it is important to wait at least 3-4 hours before breastfeeding.