

Family Planning

Family planning is an important consideration for breastfeeding women. Spacing children at least 24 months apart allows a mother time to build her nutrient stores and time to enjoy her new baby.

- ◆ Exclusively breastfeeding may keep your periods from returning and thus help with contraception, but other methods are more reliable and won't interfere with your breastfeeding.
- ◆ Progesterone-only methods such as Norplant implants, Depo-Provera injections and mini-pills are considered safe while breastfeeding. Wait until six weeks after delivery before starting these birth control methods.
- ◆ IUDs, condoms, cervical caps, diaphragms and spermicide methods do not interfere with breastfeeding.
- ◆ Birth control methods containing estrogen should not be used while breastfeeding.



Baby Blues and Depression

Many women get the “Baby Blues” after giving birth. Symptoms may include crying easily, feeling overwhelmed irritability, exhaustion, trouble sleeping and anxiety. The “blues” usually do not last more than a few weeks.

If the symptoms get worse or don't go away, it may be a sign of postpartum depression. Signs include emotional numbness, social withdrawal and feelings of failure. Women with severe depression can feel suicidal. Depression is treatable. If you feel you are depressed or have any of the symptoms of depression, contact your doctor.

My Breastfeeding Plans: _____

My WIC Breastfeeding Counselor: _____

Phone Number: _____

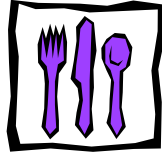
Taking Care of Yourself and Your Baby While Breastfeeding



Eating
Rest
Exercise
Alcohol/Smoking/Medications
Contraception
Depression

Eating Well

Many women choose not to breastfeed because they think they need to eat a “perfect” diet to make nutritious milk. This is not true! Women all over the world produce nutritious milk no matter what foods they eat.



Breastfeeding uses lots of calories and you may feel hungry more often. Eating three meals and snacks will help give you energy throughout the day.

- ◆ Eat a variety of foods with lots of fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Drink only to satisfy your thirst; you don't need to drink more than that.
- ◆ Continue taking your prenatal vitamin.
- ◆ All foods are okay to eat. (Only a very few number of babies have allergies and could be sensitive to what you eat. These babies especially need your protective milk. Call your WIC nutritionist for help with nutrition if you need it.
- ◆ If you drink caffeinated beverages, a couple a day will probably not bother your baby. If your baby seems fussy or seems sensitive you can always cut back.

Rest

Fatigue is common in new mothers and getting enough rest can be hard. Rest is very important to a mother's well-being and ability to make good decisions.



- ◆ Sleep when your baby sleeps. Nap with baby.
- ◆ Do not take on too much. Only do what is necessary.
- ◆ Go to bed early.
- ◆ Have friends and family help you for a few hours each day or week while you breastfeed.

Getting in Shape

Being physically active is important for a healthy mind and body. It can reduce stress and make you feel refreshed. With your doctor's permission you can start exercising at about 6 weeks after delivery.

- ◆ Walking, running, swimming and bicycling are good fitness activities.
- ◆ Wear a supportive bra or athletic bra during exercise.
- ◆ Many breastfeeding women have a steady weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds per month during the early months of breastfeeding. Overweight women may lose up to 4½ pounds a month without affecting milk production.
- ◆ If you do vigorous upper body exercises, it is best to empty the breasts by nursing or pumping first.

Alcohol

It is best not to drink alcohol while breastfeeding. Alcohol passes quickly into breast milk and could harm your baby.

- ◆ If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only occasionally, in small amounts, and after a breastfeeding. Limit your intake to a glass of beer or wine, 1 or 2 times a week.
- ◆ If you have a problem with alcohol, seek help and do not breastfeed.

Smoking

You may have cut down during your pregnancy. If so great! Some moms find this is a good time to cut back or quit altogether. Nicotine and other harmful products pass into your breast milk. Passive smoke is also very dangerous and puts your baby at higher risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), respiratory illness, ear infections, and childhood behavior problems.

- ◆ If you are unable to quit, try cutting back on the number of cigarettes you smoke and smoke after a breastfeeding rather than right before.
- ◆ Always smoke away from your baby.
- ◆ Reduce the amount of smoke your baby breathes by making Your house smoke-free.
- ◆ If you want to quit, contact your doctor for help.



Medications

Always check with your doctor before taking any medications. Your doctor can select ones that are safe to take while breastfeeding.