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MyPyramid in Action: Tips for Breastfeeding Moms

How Can I Lose Weight After My Baby Is Born?

Breastfeeding is best for moms and their babies for many reasons. One reason is that breastfeeding makes it easier to lose the weight gained during pregnancy, by using up extra calories. Also, breast milk helps fight infections and reduces allergies, so breastfed babies are sick less often.



Follow your [MyPyramid Plan for Moms](#) (see other side) to choose the right amount from each food group. In addition, visit your doctor. While you are breastfeeding, your doctor can keep track of your weight and tell you if you are losing weight as you should. If you are losing weight too slowly, cut back on the calories you are eating. The best way to eat fewer calories is to decrease the amount of “extras” you are eating.

What are “extras”?

Extras are added sugars and solid fats in foods. Some examples of foods with “extras” are the following:

- Soft drinks
- Candies
- Desserts
- Biscuits
- Sweetened cereals
- Fried foods
- Cheese
- Whole milk
- Sweetened yogurt
- Sausages
- Fatty meats

Look for choices that are low-fat, fat-free, unsweetened, or with no-added sugars.

Your need for fluids also increases while you are breastfeeding. You may notice that you are thirstier than before. Drink enough water and other fluids to quench your thirst. A common suggestion is to drink a glass of water or other beverage every time you breastfeed. Some beverages, such as soft drinks and fruit drinks, contain added sugars. Limit your intake of these beverages.

Drinking a moderate amount (up to two to three 8-fluid-ounce cups a day) of coffee or other caffeinated beverages does not affect your baby. The Dietary Guidelines recommend that breastfeeding women not drink alcoholic beverages. Any alcohol that is in your bloodstream while you are breastfeeding can pass into breast milk.

What About Physical Activity?

Unless your doctor advises you not to be physically active, include 30 minutes or more of physical activity, such as walking or swimming, on most if not all days of the week.

- The physical activity can be done in short periods of 10 minutes.
- The total time of 30 minutes is what is important.








What Should I Eat?

MyPyramid Plan for Moms

When you are breastfeeding, you have special nutritional needs. Follow the MyPyramid Plan for Moms below to help you and your baby stay healthy.

- Eat these amounts from each food group daily.
- The calories and amounts of food you need differ if you are only breastfeeding or breastfeeding and giving formula.
- Choose the Plan that is right for you.
- In each food group, choose foods and beverages that are low in “extras.”

| Food Group | Breastfeeding only | Breastfeeding plus formula | What counts as 1 cup or 1 ounce? | Remember to... |
|--|---|----------------------------|--|--|
| | Eat this amount from each group daily.* | | | |
| Fruits  | 2 cups | 2 cups | 1 cup fruit or juice ½ cup dried fruit | <i>Focus on fruits—</i> Eat a variety of fruits. |
| Vegetables  | 3 cups | 3 cups | 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables or juice 2 cups raw leafy vegetables | <i>Vary your veggies—</i> Eat more dark-green and orange vegetables and cooked dry beans. |
| Grains  | 8 ounces | 7 ounces | 1 slice bread 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal ½ cup cooked pasta, rice, or cereal | <i>Make half your grains whole—</i> Choose whole instead of refined grains. |
| Meat & Beans  | 6½ ounces | 6 ounces | 1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or fish ¼ cup cooked dry beans ½ ounce nuts or 1 egg 1 tablespoon peanut butter | <i>Go lean with protein—</i> Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry. |
| Milk  | 3 cups | 3 cups | 1 cup milk 8 ounces yogurt 1½ ounces cheese 2 ounces processed cheese | <i>Get your calcium-rich foods—</i> Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, and cheese. |

*These amounts are for an average breastfeeding woman. You may need more or less than the average. Check with your doctor to make sure you are losing the weight you gained during pregnancy.



Get a MyPyramid Plan for Moms designed just for you.
Go to www.MyPyramid.gov for your Plan and more.
Click on “Pregnancy and Breastfeeding.”