

## Provider Information

### BF – Breastfeeding

#### BF-N NUTRITION (MATERNAL)

**OUTCOME:** The parent/family will understand the foods that contribute to the nutritional well-being of breastfeeding mothers.

#### STANDARDS:

1. Encourage consumption of same kinds of foods that are important during pregnancy.
2. Identify foods to avoid if necessary (e.g., chocolate, gas forming food, and highly seasoned foods).
3. Emphasize the increased need for water in the diet of breastfeeding mothers.

#### Healthy Eating

Many new mothers wonder if they should be on a special diet while breastfeeding, but the answer is no. You can take in the same number of calories that you did before becoming pregnant, which helps with weight loss after birth. There are no foods you have to avoid. In fact, you can continue to enjoy the foods that are important to your family – the special meals you know and love.

As for how your diet affects your baby, there are no special foods that will help you make more milk. You may find that some foods cause stomach upset in your baby. You can try avoiding those foods to see if your baby feels better and ask your baby's doctor for help.

#### Keep these important nutrition tips in mind:

- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated (but fluid intake does not affect the amount of breast milk you make). Drink when you are thirsty, and drink more fluids if your urine is dark yellow. A common suggestion is to drink a glass of water or other beverage every time you breastfeed.
- Limit beverages that contain added sugars, such as soft drinks and fruit drinks.
- Drinking a moderate amount (up to 2 to 3 cups a day) of coffee or other caffeinated beverages does not cause a problem for most breastfeeding babies. Too much caffeine can cause the baby to be fussy or not sleep well.
- Vitamin and mineral supplements cannot replace a healthy diet. In addition to healthy food choices, some breastfeeding women may need a multivitamin and mineral supplement. Talk with your doctor to find out if you need a supplement.

### **Can a baby be allergic to breast milk?**

Research shows that a mother's milk is affected only slightly by the foods she eats. Breastfeeding mothers can eat whatever they have eaten during their lifetimes and do not need to avoid certain foods. Babies love the flavors of foods that come through in your milk. Sometimes a baby may be sensitive to something you eat, such as dairy products like milk and cheese. Symptoms in your baby of an allergy or sensitivity to something you eat include some or all of these:

- Green stools with mucus and/or blood, diarrhea, vomiting
- Rash, eczema, dermatitis, hives, dry skin
- Fussiness during and/or after feedings
- Crying for long periods without being able to feel consoled
- Sudden waking with discomfort
- Wheezing or coughing

Babies who are highly sensitive usually react to the food the mother eats within minutes or within 4 to 24 hours afterward. These signs do not mean the baby is allergic to your milk itself, only to something you are eating. If you stop eating whatever is bothering your baby or eat less of it, the problem usually goes away on its own. You also can talk with your baby's doctor about any symptoms. If your baby ever has problems breathing, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Click here for a Patient Education Handout for the mother on the **Maternal Nutrition** during breastfeeding.

Flesch 67/7th