



Food for a nursing mother

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Abstract. Someone once said that the birth of a baby is a lifelong celebration. It's hard to disagree with this. But I always want to add that this holiday sometimes confuses future parents and forces them to independently look for answers to many questions that arise. One of the most important things in the first days of a little person's life is the mother's nutrition, of course, if she intends to breastfeed him.

Key words: food during breastfeeding, recommendations, benefits, harm, beneficial properties, contraindications

Diet for a nursing mother: to be or not to be

It's no secret that everything eaten by a nursing mother ends up in the baby's body. He may react violently to some foods, for example, with a rash or intestinal colic, but to others neutrally. But all of them, one way or another, influence his growth and development. This is why many pediatricians advise reviewing your diet during the feeding period, especially if it was previously far from correct. And remove harmful or low-quality products from it, replacing them with healthy and safe ones.

Nevertheless, we all try to give our children only the best and often overdo it in our efforts. If earlier in our society it was believed that the diet of a nursing mother should be no different from the diet of an ordinary woman, then over time everything has changed.

There are a huge number of pediatric practitioners who you want to listen to. After all, each of them gives their own advice and recommendations regarding the mode and frequency of feeding the baby, as well as the quantity and quality of foods eaten by the mother. And everything would be fine, but many of them, although based on medical science, still somewhat contradict each other and mislead young parents.

In order not to get confused and to provide yourself and your child with a sufficient amount of vitamins and microelements that he needs for growth and development, and the mother needs to restore her strength and fulfill her responsibilities for caring for him, you can listen to the advice of foreign nutrition experts. They remain unchanged for many years and have compelling arguments.

In them, nutritionists do not insist on changing the diet, but only on increasing the consumed kilocalories, which are spent on feeding itself. And they believe that since an adult is supposed to eat according to the principle of the “*food pyramid*,” it means that a young nursing mother should do the same.

A few words about the food pyramid

food pyramid " first appeared in 1974. Presenting a visual diagram of proper nutrition, it showed the number of servings of different food groups that a person should eat per day for normal life.

It followed from it that most of all you need to consume cereals and grains. A little less fruits and vegetables. There are even fewer dairy and meat products, including fish. And the smallest amount of substances consumed should be vegetable oils, fats and carbohydrates.

In the 2000s, nutritionists introduced a new term - “*food plate* ”. This is an improved nutrition system adapted for modern people. It involves maximum consumption of fruits and vegetables, less cereals and grains, and minimal protein (meat and fish).

Experts insist that a nursing mother needs to eat 300-500 kilocalories more than usual, since they are spent on the process of feeding and pumping, if it occurs. It follows from this that her body should receive at least 2000 - 2500 kcal daily. The final figure depends on many factors, such as weight, load, frequency of feeding, mother's metabolic rate, her age, etc.

Feeding and weight loss

Many mothers who have gained extra pounds during pregnancy strive to return to their previous shape as quickly as possible. And they begin to limit themselves in food, reducing the number of calories consumed to 1200 or less.

Meanwhile, doctors say that such restrictions can not only negatively affect their health and well-being, but also lead to a significant decrease in the amount of breast milk. As a result, this will make things worse for both the mother, who is constantly tired and hungry, and the malnourished child.

You can avoid this fate and get back in shape by listening to the advice of nutrition experts. They recommend:

- Lose weight gradually, not all at once, for at least a year;
- According to the advice of the La Leche League (an international organization of volunteer mothers), “begin to perform the slightest physical exercise no earlier than 2 months after the birth of the baby in order to allow the body to fully recover and normalize hormonal levels.”
- Don’t rush to eat every time you feel hungry. Sometimes for a nursing mother it is quenched with a glass of water or low-fat milk.
- Drink about 6-8 glasses of liquid per day. This will not only allow you to gradually lose weight, but also help increase lactation.

Vegetarian mothers and breastfeeding

Vegetarian mothers can also successfully feed their baby, provided they follow all doctor's recommendations. The fact is that their body may not have enough vitamin B12, calcium, iron and DHA acid, which is necessary for the normal development of the child’s eyes and brain.

However, there is some good news. Research shows that breast milk from vegan mothers contains fewer toxins than milk from meat-eating mothers. [1]

Vitamins and minerals

The following vitamins and microelements must be supplied to the nursing mother's body:

- **Calcium.** It will protect the mother's bones and teeth during feeding and help form a strong skeletal system for the baby. In addition to dairy products, it is found in green leafy vegetables. [2]
- **Kholin.** It participates in metabolic processes in the body and promotes brain development, normalizes heart rate and strengthens the heart muscle. It is found in egg yolks, chicken and beef liver and cauliflower.
- **Zinc.** It is responsible for the functioning of the immune system and enters the body from seafood, oatmeal, eggs, honey and citrus fruits. [3]
- **Vitamin C.** A source of antioxidants, which also has a positive effect on the immune system and promotes the absorption of iron. It is found in citrus fruits, rose hips, bell peppers, cabbage and strawberries. [4]
- **Potassium.** It is responsible for the functioning of the heart and is found mainly in vegetables and fruits, in particular potatoes and bananas. [5]
- **Iron.** The level of hemoglobin in the blood depends on it. It is found in meat and spinach. [6]
- **Omega-3 fatty acids,** which influence the development of the nervous system. They are found in fatty fish. [7]

The quality of breast milk depends on many factors. Nevertheless, one of the most important is the food that enters the mother's body. During this period, it must be of high quality and natural without preservatives and dyes. That is why a nursing mother should give up processed foods and other store-bought treats and switch to homemade food.

Top 10 products for nursing mothers

1. Oatmeal is a complex carbohydrate. Incredibly nutritious and healthy, it contains fiber and iron and helps improve bowel function and increase hemoglobin. [8]
2. Eggs. They contain DHA acid and vitamin D [9], which are needed by the child's vision, brain and skeletal system. But they must be consumed very carefully, as they are allergens.
3. Green leafy vegetables. They contain vitamin A, iron, calcium and folic acid, which together have a positive effect on the growth and development of the baby.
4. Berries. It is a source of antioxidants and fiber. They boost immunity and improve well-being, and also have a positive effect on intestinal function.
5. Almond. It enriches the body with DHA acid, calcium and magnesium and helps improve lactation.
6. Fish. It is a source of protein and DHA acid.
7. Avocado. It contains folic acid, vitamins E and C. It improves metabolic processes, affects heart function, removes cholesterol from the body and rejuvenates it, and is also responsible for the health of the nervous system. And helps increase lactation. [10]
8. Sunflower seeds. They contain amino acids, vitamins and minerals necessary for normal growth and development of the body. They can be added to yogurt and fruit salads or consumed on their own.
9. Water – it helps increase lactation. You can replace it with low-fat milk, green tea or compote. You can drink fruit juices if they do not cause allergies in your baby. [eleven] _
10. Live yogurt. A source of probiotics for mom and baby. [12]

Harmful foods for a nursing mother

- **Alcohol.** It poisons the body with toxins and negatively affects the nervous system.

- **Coffee, black tea, chocolate** - they contain caffeine, which leaches calcium from the bones and causes overexcitement in the child. In addition, chocolate can cause a rash or change the taste of breast milk. [13] _
- **Products that may cause allergies.** They are different for each child. These include nuts, eggs and some types of fish. They should be used carefully, gradually introducing them into your diet and noting the slightest changes, if any.
- **Citrus fruits.** These are allergens that can also negatively affect the baby's digestion, causing colic and excessive regurgitation, and impair the taste of breast milk.
- **Herbs and herbal teas.** All of them can have a positive and negative effect on the body of the mother and baby, so only a doctor can authorize their use.
- **All types of cabbage and legumes.** They provoke bloating in the child.
- **Garlic.** Like other spices, it can negatively affect the taste and smell of breast milk. [14] _
- **Dairy.** Sometimes they cause allergies or bloating in the baby.

The key to a child's health is not only the mother's balanced and proper nutrition, but also frequent walks in the fresh air, as well as her good mood. It transmits to him, calms him and improves his sleep. And this is the second equally important question for many parents, isn't it?

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