

English

Advice about food for you who are breastfeeding



LIVSMEDELS
VERKET

There are few things that change your life as much as becoming a parent. Many routines are turned upside down when you have a baby to look after and your own needs easily take second place.

Even if it may be difficult to find time between breastfeeds and nappy changes, it is important to remember to eat well!

This brochure gives you some simple advice to put you on the right track.

Your child gets its nourishment from you

Good to eat

Breast milk contains all the nutrients that your child needs in order to grow and develop during its first six months. The child takes all the nourishment it needs. To ensure that you yourself do not have too little nourishment it is important for you to choose good and nourishing food.

You need a little more of most nutrients when breastfeeding. In particular choose food that contains a lot of vitamin D, omega 3-fat and folate (folic acid). It is also good to restore iron levels after pregnancy by eating food rich in iron. See the box with good sources below.

A simple basic rule for getting all the nutrients is to eat many different kinds of food every day. You should eat:

- 500 g fruit and vegetables every day, for example two portions of vegetables and three of fruit
- fish 2–3 times a week; see the fish list on page 3
- skimmed milk, natural skimmed sour milk and natural low-fat yoghurt, about half a litre a day
- low-fat margarine on your sandwiches and liquid margarine or oil for cooking purposes
- meat, chicken, eggs, beans, lentils or peas every day
- bread and potatoes, rice, pasta, bulgur wheat or similar every day – preferably a wholegrain alternative.

Good sources of

Vitamin D

Vitamin D-fortified foods: Skimmed milk, skimmed sour milk, natural low-fat yoghurt, most types of margarine. Fish and eggs. Sunlight, too, is an important source.

DHA, an omega 3-fat

Oily fish, such as salmon, mackerel and herring.

Folate/folic acid

Vegetables, beans, chickpeas, lentils, fruit, berries and wholegrain products.

Iron

Meat, liver pâté, black pudding and wholegrain bread.

Iodine

You also need iodine when breastfeeding. You should therefore use iodine-fortified salt, but do not use too much salt. Many mineral, herbal and flaked salts are not iodine-enriched. Read on the packaging.

Fish and shellfish is good for you

Fish and shellfish are rich in vitamin D, iodine and selenium, all of which are important when you are breastfeeding. Oily fish, such as salmon and mackerel, also contain omega 3-fat. So eat fish 2-3 times a week and choose different kinds, both oily and non-oily.

Just as when you were pregnant there are some kinds of fish that may contain raised levels of mercury or dioxins and PCB. You should not eat these as often, maximum 2-3 times a year. This is particularly relevant if you eat fish that have not been caught commercially since many of the kinds in question are caught by anglers.

Eat 2-3 times a week, choose different kinds

Examples of ordinary fish, fish products and shellfish that are safe to eat:

All farmed fish
Alaska pollock
Anchovies
Blue mussels
Canned tuna
Catfish
Cod
Crab, the white flesh
Crayfish
Fishballs
Fish-fingers
Flounders/dabs
Haddock
Hake
Herring, including pickled
Hoki
Lobster
Mackerel
Plaice
Prawns
Saithe
Salmon and trout
Sardines
Scallops
Stockfish
Tilapia
Whitefish

The list is not exhaustive and there are many other kinds that are good to eat.

A couple of times a year

Eat maximum 2-3 times a year
- because of mercury:

Atlantic halibut (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*)
Burbot
Perch
Pike
Pikeperch
Ray
Shark
Swordfish
Tuna, fresh/frozen

Eat maximum 2-3 times a year
- because of dioxins, PCB:

Baltic herring, fermented Baltic herring

Salmon and salmon trout from the Baltic, Lake Vänern and Vättern and char from Lake Vättern. The advice primarily concerns women who eat fish that have been caught non-commercially, since these fish are seldom to be found in normal shops.

Certain fish are less good to eat for environmental reasons. Read more about fish and the environment on www.livsmedelsverket.se.

The plate model provides balance

In order to achieve a good balance between different nutrients you can use the plate model when serving your meal. It shows the appropriate proportions of the various types of food.



Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner and take some exercise

Try to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner and one or two good snacks. That makes it easier to keep away from soft drinks, cakes, ice-cream, sweets and treats.

Taking exercise is just as important as eating well, preferably for 30 minutes a day or more. It doesn't have to mean working out at a gym. A walk with the baby-buggy is good as well.

How much weight shall I lose?

The best thing is to be able to get down to your original weight within one year, but don't take this too fast. The first few weeks after giving birth many lose weight at great speed, which is quite natural. After that it is better

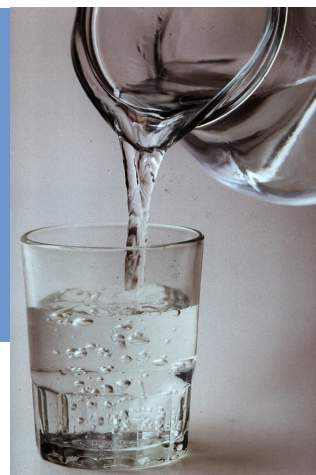
to lose weight a little more slowly – preferably not more than half a kilo a week.

If you are overweight it is important to try and get down to a normal weight. You can do this by eating good food in suitable quantities. Especially if you are planning to have more children. If you are of normal weight the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth is reduced. Ask at your care centre whether you can get help from a dietitian.

You need extra water

You need approximately one litre of water extra per day when you are breastfeeding since fluid is needed for the breast milk.

If you drink when you are thirsty then you will get enough. Avoid soft drinks and other sweet beverages since they give neither you nor the child any nourishment, but only unnecessary calories.



To bear in mind

Alcohol has no positive effects on breastfeeding. According to current research, however, it involves no medical risks for the child if you consume moderate amounts of alcohol when you are breastfeeding, that is to say 1-2 glasses of wine or its equivalent 1-2 times a week. The amount of alcohol that the child can ingest with the milk is very small.

Read about other effects of alcohol in the brochure "Tänk efter i vilket sällskap du berusar dig!", which is published by the Swedish National Institute of Public Health. Your child healthcare center provides advice about parenthood and alcohol.

Food supplements, herbal products, natural remedies and herbal medicinal products are things you should be careful about when breastfeeding, since you often don't know whether they can be harmful to the child. Do not, therefore, use such products without first having discussed them with the nurse at the child healthcare centre or a doctor.

You should totally avoid **ginseng products**. They are unsuitable when you are breastfeeding. Be careful, too, with **algae products that contain a lot of iodine**. Excessive doses of iodine can be harmful.

The advice about **listeria** and **toxoplasma** applies only to pregnant women, not those who are breastfeeding.

Caffeine from coffee and tea is transferred to the child via the breast milk in such small quantities that it does not harm the child. You do not, therefore, need to cut down on coffee or tea when breastfeeding.

The keyhole – quick guide to good food habits

If you want to find healthier food in an easy way then the keyhole symbol can help you - both when you are shopping and when you eat out. Keyhole-labelled food contains less and healthier fat, less sugar and salt and more fibre than other foods of the same type.

Fruit, vegetables, meat and fish can be keyhole-labelled. High-fibre bread, cereals and pasta can also carry the keyhole symbol, as well as low-fat charcuterie and dairy products. Differences of a few percent in the fat content of your diet makes a difference in the long term.



Are you planning to have more children?

Even if it seems far off right now, you may perhaps gradually start to think in terms of more children. When you might become pregnant again it's good to start taking folic acid tablets. 400 micrograms of folic acid per day reduces the risk of the foetus developing spina bifida.

In order for it to be effective you should start taking the tablets about a month before you become pregnant.



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