

Healthy eating while breastfeeding



Eating healthy food is important for your wellbeing when you are breastfeeding.

Here are some quick and easy healthy food/drink ideas, including some you can make and eat with one hand.

Tips

- Enjoy a variety of foods from all 5 food groups.
- You may be hungrier than usual when breastfeeding. Producing breastmilk requires more energy from food than during pregnancy. More wholegrain foods and vegetables are recommended.
- Your body uses a lot of fluid to make breastmilk so you will need to drink more than usual. Pages 7 and 8 have some ideas about staying hydrated.
- Advice about eating fish high in mercury is the same as in pregnancy. Avoid eating shark, marlin and swordfish and limit canned fish to 2-3 times per week.
- You can eat some foods that are unsafe in pregnancy such as deli meats, soft cheeses and smoked fish.
- Alcohol and caffeine pass into breastmilk and can affect your baby. See page 8 for more information.
- Limit how often you enjoy foods high in added sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. These are foods such as lollies, cakes, biscuits, pies, chips and chocolate.

The five food groups

The key to eating well is to enjoy a variety of foods from each of the 5 food groups.

The 5 food groups are:



Vegetables and legumes



Fruit



Grains and cereals
(preferably wholegrain)



Meats and alternatives
including legumes



Dairy and alternatives

Useful weblinks



Eat for Health

Healthy eating while
breastfeeding information.
eatforhealth.gov.au

Healthy snacks

Wholegrains

Choose wholemeal varieties for more fibre.



Rice cakes



Bread



Crackers



Muesli



Popcorn



Flatbreads

Sources of protein



Peanut butter



Nuts



Hummus



Yoghurt



Cheese



Milk



Boiled egg

Fruit or vegetables



Carrot sticks



Avocado



Frozen berries



Banana



Cucumber



Dried fruit

Examples



Crackers + carrot sticks + dip + cheese slices = **mini snack board**



Popcorn + dried fruit + pretzels + mixed nuts = **popcorn trail mix**



Rice cakes + peanut butter + banana = **rice cake toppers**



Avocado + boiled egg + wholegrain toast + spices = **smashed avo**



Yoghurt + frozen berries (defrosted) + muesli = **yoghurt bowl**



Milk + banana + oats + cocoa = **choc banana smoothie**

Milk + yoghurt + berries + peanut butter + chia seeds = **PB & J smoothie**

Building a balanced meal

Pick a wholegrain

Choose wholemeal or wholegrain varieties for more fibre.



Pasta



Brown rice



Cous cous



Wraps



Quinoa



Rice noodles

Pick a lean protein



Chicken



Lean beef
or lamb



Fish



Minced
meat



Beans +
legumes



Firm tofu

Add vegetables and flavour



Frozen veg



Fresh veg



Onion + garlic



Salad veg



Starchy veg



Herbs + spices

Meal ideas



Veggie-loaded
spaghetti bolognese



Microwave risotto



Fried rice



Mexican burrito



Green curry



Slow cooker
beef stroganoff



Chicken
stir-fry



Pasta bake

Useful weblinks



No Money, No Time
Quick, easy and healthy
meal tips and recipes.
nomoneynotime.com.au

Easy meals using food from the cupboard



Tinned vegetables

Tomatoes, chickpeas, lentils, baked beans, corn, beetroot.



Microwaveable grains

Pasta, rice, quinoa, cous cous, oats. Wholemeal varieties have more fibre.



Canned fish*

Salmon, sardines, tuna.



Breads & crackers

Wraps, English muffins, rice crackers, bagels. Wholemeal varieties have more fibre.



Dried fruit & nuts

Great for snacking, adding to salads or on top of meals.



Oil & vinegar

Combine virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar for the perfect salad dressing.



Herbs & spices

Some essentials: cinnamon, cumin, Italian herbs, pepper, zaatar, turmeric.



Healthy sauces & spreads

Pesto, peanut butter, low-fat mayo, mustard.

Examples of meals



Rice + lentils + corn + sultanas + spices = **warm rice salad**



Baked beans + pesto + Italian herbs + toast = **herby baked beans**



Pasta + tinned salmon + mayo + corn + seasoning = **creamy pasta salad**



Wrap + chickpeas + tuna + beetroot + mustard = **easy lunch wrap**



Oats + dried apple or apricot + nuts + cinnamon = **fibre-packed porridge**

*Canned fish is safe to eat 2-3 times per week for breastfeeding or pregnant women. Visit the [NSW Food Authority](#) for more information.

Cupboard basics

Tinned food

- Chickpeas/kidney beans/lentils
- Four bean mix
- Tomatoes
- Corn
- Beetroot
- Tuna/salmon/sardines
- Baked beans



Spreads, sauces & oil

- Peanut butter
- Honey
- Vegemite
- Tomato paste or pasta sauce
- Tomato sauce (low salt)
- Soy sauce (low salt)
- Balsamic vinegar
- Asian sauces (fish, oyster, hoisin)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Vegetable oil
- Spray olive oil



Grains & pasta

- Rice (jasmine, basmati, brown)
- Cous cous or maize
- Short pasta (penne, spirals)
- Long pasta (spaghetti, fettuccini)
- Noodles (soba, vermicelli)
- Popcorn kernels
- Wholegrain bread
- Wholegrain wraps or flatbread
- Dried legumes or soup mix



Baking basics

- Baking flour (try wholemeal)
- Cornflour
- White sugar
- Brown sugar
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Vanilla essence
- Raisins or sultanas
- Baking packet mixes



UHT Milk/alternatives

- Dairy milk
- Soy/almond/oat milk



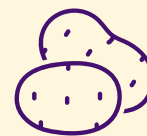
Snacks

- Mixed nuts & seeds
- Dried fruit mix
- Plain popcorn
- Wholegrain crackers
- Rice crackers
- Rice cakes
- Nut bars



Pantry vegetables

- Potatoes
- Sweet potato
- Onion
- Garlic



Herbs & spices

- Iodised salt
- Black pepper
- Mixed herbs
- Chilli flakes
- Cinnamon
- Spice blends (e.g. taco spices, Moroccan seasoning)
- Curry powder or paste
- Cumin, coriander, sumac, zaatar



Useful weblinks



Live Lighter
Quick, easy and healthy meal ideas.
livelighter.com.au/recipe



Healthy Eating, Active Living
Healthy eating tips and recipes.
healthyliving.nsw.gov.au

Quick kitchen tips



Make double

Pack leftovers into a container. Eat for lunch the next day or store in the freezer.



Pre-chopped vegetables

Salad mixes, coleslaw, carrot sticks, roasting veg, stir-fry veg and spinach leaves save time and effort.



Slow cookers

Put the ingredients in and leave to cook while you go about your day.



One pan recipes

Try tray bake dinners such as baked risotto or roasted vegetables with feta. One tray means less to clean.



Cook in the microwave*

- Pasta (10 mins + water)
- Rice (15 mins + water)
- Scrambled eggs (1 min)
- Mug cake (2 mins)



Air fryers

Save time by cooking chopped potato, sweet potato or carrot in the air fryer. A great hot chip alternative.



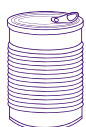
Blenders

Put your onions, garlic and veggies in a blender and wizz up for the basis of a meal.



Grocery delivery

Shop online to save time. Save your shopping list so the basics are always covered.



Tinned and frozen food

Tinned or frozen beans, fish, fruit and vegetables are convenient and just as nutritious as fresh food.



Turn pancake mix into muffins

Make up a pancake shaker mix, add some fruit and oats, pour into a muffin tray and cook for 15 minutes in the oven.

*Settings may vary between different microwaves.

Useful weblinks



Quick and healthy recipes

Easy ideas for dinner and lunches
isld.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/health-promotion/healthy-adults/quick-and-healthy-recipes



Love Food, Hate Waste

Simple ways to save food, money and our planet.
lovefoodhatewaste.com

Staying hydrated

Dehydration is a common issue for breastfeeding mothers. Your body uses a lot of fluid to create breastmilk. You will need to drink more fluid than usual when breastfeeding.

Here are some healthy drinks and tips to help you stay hydrated.

Tips to drink more water



Fill up a water bottle at the start of the day.



Drink some water every time you breastfeed.



Set an alarm as a reminder.



Add flavour for more variety.



Water is the best drink choice

- All fluids count but water is a better choice than sugary drinks.
- Fruit juice, soft drinks and cordial may reduce your appetite for more nourishing foods.



Milk

- Milk is a good source of calcium.

Other ways to include fluids

- Snack on fruits and vegetables like cucumber, watermelon or oranges.
- Make a smoothie:
 - Banana + milk + yoghurt + cocoa
 - Frozen berries + milk + peanut butter + oats
 - Mango + spinach + coconut water + mint leaves.
- Include soup in the winter months.

Tired of plain water? Ideas to add flavour:



- Lemon, lime or orange
- Frozen berries
- Cucumber
- Mint leaves
- Soda water
- Cold infusion tea
- A dash of juice.

Check for caffeine

Caffeine passes through breastmilk and can make babies irritable or unsettled. Limit caffeine to **200mg** a day when breastfeeding.* Try decaffeinated options for an alternative.



Espresso (single shot) = 70-90mg



Instant coffee (1 teaspoon) = 80mg



Black tea (1 teabag) = 50mg normal strength



Cola drinks (1 can) = 50mg
(See soft drink information below)



Energy drink 500mL = 160mg caffeine



Pre-workout supplements are **not suitable**.*

*Recommendations from Food Standards Australia and New Zealand.

What about alcohol?

Not drinking alcohol is the safest option while breastfeeding.

- The **alcohol concentration** in your blood and breastmilk is **the same**.
- Alcohol **reduces milk flow**.
- Alcohol in breastmilk may impact a baby's **brain development**.

If you consume alcohol, it is recommended to:

- 1) Breastfeed **before** drinking alcohol
- 2) Limit to **one** standard drink
- 3) Wait **2-3 hours** before breastfeeding or expressing.

If you are struggling to stop drinking, contact a healthcare professional for support.



What about sugar and other sweeteners?

- Drinks with added sugar or sweeteners include soft drinks, flavoured waters, fruit drinks, cordials, iced tea, energy drinks and sports drinks.
- These drinks have little or no nutritional benefit and can cause tooth decay and other dental problems.
- Sugar-sweetened drinks can lead to weight gain.



Useful weblinks



Every Moment Matters
Tips for giving up alcohol before, during and after pregnancy.
everymomentmatters.org.au



Get Healthy in Pregnancy
Free health coaching
gethealthynsw.com.au



Australian Breastfeeding Association
Factsheets and videos
breastfeeding.asn.au



MotherSafe
Phone advice on medications and alcohol
seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au

