



## 12 Super-Foods for New Moms

Losing those pregnancy pounds might be at the front of your mind. But there's something that's even more important for your body after your baby arrives: eating foods that give you the energy to be the best mom you can be.

Routinely eating healthy foods throughout the day will maximize the little energy you probably have as a new mom. If you're nursing, the quality of your breast milk stays pretty much the same no matter what you eat. But there's a catch: When you aren't getting the needed nutrients from your diet, your body will provide them from your own stores. So make sure you get all the nutrients you and your baby need. It will benefit both of you. Try to make these healthy foods a regular part of your diet.

### SALMON

There's no such thing as a perfect food. But salmon is pretty close to it when it comes to nutritional powerhouse for new moms. Salmon, like other fatty fish, is loaded with a type of fat called DHA. DHA is crucial to the development of your baby's nervous system. All breast milk contains DHA, but levels of it are higher in the milk of women who get more DHA from their diets.

The DHA in salmon may also help your mood. Studies suggest it may play a role in preventing postpartum depression.

One Caution: The FDA recommends breastfeeding women, women who are pregnant, and women who might get pregnant limit how much salmon they eat. The guidelines recommend an average of 12 ounces per week. The reason is to limit the amount of mercury your child is exposed to. The mercury level in salmon is considered low.



### LOW-FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS

Whether you prefer yogurt, milk, or cheese, dairy products are an important part of healthy breastfeeding. Milk delivers a boost of bone-strengthening vitamin D. In addition to providing protein and B vitamins, dairy products are one of the best sources of calcium. If you are breastfeeding, your milk is loaded with calcium to help your baby's bones develop, so it's important for you to eat enough calcium to meet your needs. Try including 3 cups of dairy per day.



### LEAN BEEF

Boost your energy as a new mom with iron-rich foods like lean beef. A lack of iron can drain your energy levels, making it hard for you to keep up with the demands of a newborn baby. Nursing moms need to eat extra protein and vitamin B-12. Lean beef is an excellent source for both.

### LEGUMES

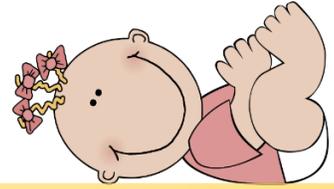
Iron-rich beans, particularly dark-colored ones like black beans and kidney beans, are a great breastfeeding food, especially for vegetarians. They're a budget-friendly source of high quality non-animal protein.



### BLUEBERRIES

Breastfeeding moms should be sure to get two servings or more of fruit or juice each day. Blueberries are an excellent choice to help meet your needs. These satisfying and yummy berries are filled with good-for-you vitamins and minerals, and they give you a healthy dose of carbohydrates to keep your energy levels high.





## BROWN RICE

You might be tempted to cut back on carbs to help lose the baby weight. Don't. Losing weight too quickly may cause you to make less milk and leave you feeling sluggish. Mix healthy, whole-grain carbs like brown rice into your diet to keep your energy levels up. Foods like brown rice provide your body the calories it needs to make the best-quality milk for your baby.

## ORANGES

Portable and nutritious, oranges are a great food to boost energy. Oranges and other citrus fruits are excellent breastfeeding foods, since nursing moms need more vitamin C than pregnant women. Can't find time to sit down for a snack? Sip on orange juice as you go about your day—you'll get the vitamin C benefit, and you can opt for calcium-fortified varieties to get even more out of your drink.



## EGGS

Eggs are a versatile way to meet your daily protein needs. Scramble a couple of eggs for breakfast, toss a hard-boiled egg or two on your lunchtime salad, or have an omelet and salad for dinner. Opt for DHA-fortified eggs to boost the level of this essential fatty acid in your milk.

## WHOLE-WHEAT BREAD

Folic acid is crucial to your baby's development in the early stages of pregnancy. But its importance doesn't end there. Folic acid is an important nutrient in your breast milk that your baby needs for good health, and it's crucial you eat enough for your own well-being, too. Enriched whole-grain breads and pastas are fortified with it, and also give you a healthy dose of fiber and iron.

## LEAFY GREENS

Leafy green veggies like spinach, Swiss chard, and broccoli are filled with vitamin A, which is good for you and your baby. The benefits don't stop there. They're a good non-dairy source of calcium and contain vitamin C and iron. Green veggies are also filled with heart-healthy antioxidants and are low in calories.

## WHOLE-GRAIN CEREAL

After yet another sleepless night, one of the best foods to boost energy for new moms in the morning is a healthy breakfast of whole-grain cereal. Many cold cereals are fortified with essential vitamins and nutrients to help you meet your daily needs. Whip up a healthy, hot breakfast by stirring blueberries and skim milk into a delicious serving of oatmeal.

## WATER

Breastfeeding moms are especially at risk for energy-draining dehydration. To keep your energy levels and milk production up, make sure you stay well-hydrated. Be careful when it comes to caffeinated drinks. Have no more than 2-3 cups a day, or switch to decaf. Caffeine enters your breast milk and can cause your baby to become irritable and sleep poorly.



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