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Breastfeeding: Benefits, Preparation, Basics

Cooperative Extension Services, University of Kentucky

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# MyPyramid Plan for Moms, A Daily Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Breastfeeding only</th>
<th>Breastfeeding plus formula</th>
<th>What counts as 1 cup or 1 ounce?</th>
<th>Remember to...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>• 1 cup fruit or juice</td>
<td>Focus on fruits—eat a variety of fruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ½ cup dried fruit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>• 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables</td>
<td>Vary your veggies—eat more dark green and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or juice</td>
<td>orange vegetables and cooked dry beans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 cups raw, leafy vegetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>8 ounces</td>
<td>7 ounces</td>
<td>• 1 slice bread</td>
<td>Make half your grains whole—choose whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal</td>
<td>instead of refined grains.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ½ cup cooked pasta, rice, or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cereal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat &amp; Beans</td>
<td>6½ ounces</td>
<td>6 ounces</td>
<td>• 1 ounce lean meat, poultry,</td>
<td>Go lean with protein—choose low-fat or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or fish</td>
<td>lean meats and poultry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ¼ cup cooked dry beans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ½ ounce nuts or 1 egg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 tablespoon peanut butter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>• 1 cup milk</td>
<td>Get your calcium-rich foods—go low-fat or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 8 ounces yogurt</td>
<td>fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ½ ounces cheese</td>
<td>cheese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 ounces processed cheese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Eat the amount shown from each group daily. These amounts are for an average breastfeeding woman. You may need more or less than the average. Check with your doctor to make sure you are losing the weight you gained during pregnancy.

**References:**


**Preparation**

**In the Hospital**
- Tell hospital staff that you plan to breastfeed.
- Tour the hospital and meet the staff who will help with breastfeeding.
- Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after delivery—within the first hour if you can.
- Offer your breast to the baby at least every 1½ to 3 hours.
- Keep your baby in the room with you.
- Ask for help with learning to breastfeed.

**At Home**
- Prepare a comfortable chair with back and arm support for breastfeeding.
- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest—sleep when the baby sleeps. When you sit down to breastfeed, drink plenty of liquids or have a snack. Check with your doctor to make sure you are losing the weight you gained during pregnancy. Get help from family and friends if you need it.
- Eat healthy by following the MyPyramid Plan for Moms.

**Benefits**

**For the Baby**
- Best nutrition
- Easy for baby to digest
- Closeness between mother and baby
- Breast milk has disease-fighting cells that help protect the baby
- Fresh, clean, and right temperature
- Fewer allergy problems for the baby
- Helps prevent weight problems in children

**For the Mother**
- Decreases risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Less expensive
- Always ready and available anywhere
- Helps the body get back into shape faster
- May help with weight loss after delivery

**The Basics**
- Make sure to hold your baby close and facing the nipple.
- Support your baby’s head and body.
- Try to get the baby to take a big mouthful of nipple and breast when latching on.
- You should feel a tug on the breast, not a sharp pain.
- Avoid formula, water, bottle nipples, or pacifiers unless ordered by your doctor.
- Allow your baby to nurse on the first breast until it is empty or until the baby releases from the breast. If your baby is still hungry, offer the other side.
- Rotate nursing sides at each feeding if your baby takes only one breast.
- Feed your baby every 1½ to 3 hours or when the baby indicates hunger. Look for feeding cues. The baby will eat around eight to 12 times a day. As the baby grows, feeding times will become less frequent.
- Each nursing will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes per breast.
- Use a breast pump to make breast milk available in your absence or if the baby has problems with nursing. It can also provide the father an opportunity to feed the baby.

Contact your local Cooperative Extension Services agent, health department, or doctor’s office for more information and local resources.