

## **Breastfeeding: Answers to Your Questions**

### ***I don't always eat right. Should I breastfeed?***

There's no special diet for breastfeeding mothers. Moms will make enough milk even if they don't always eat healthy. Try eating a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and meats or meat substitutes. Caffeine — found in colas, coffee, teas, energy drinks and chocolate — can cause your baby to be fussy. It's a good idea to limit caffeine beverages to 1 to 2 cups a day or use decaffeinated beverages. Drink water, milk or 100% juice when you are thirsty.

### ***What if I smoke?***

If you smoke, the best thing for you, your baby and your family is to try your hardest to quit. If you can't quit, breastfeeding is still best for you and your baby because the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the risks of smoking. Breastfeed before you smoke to limit the amount of nicotine that enters your milk, and try to limit the number of cigarettes smoked to fewer than 10 a day. Because second-hand smoke can increase the risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), no one should smoke inside your home or around your baby.



## ***Can I drink alcohol and breastfeed?***

Small amounts of alcohol (1 or 2 drinks) now and then are thought to be safe when breastfeeding. However, alcohol does have a greater effect on babies less than 3 months old. Drinking a lot of alcohol (more than 2 drinks per day) or drinking often can affect your ability to care for your baby, affect your milk production and can affect your baby's ability to walk and crawl. To lessen alcohol's effect on you and your baby, have no more than 1 or 2 drinks a week, and don't breastfeed for 2 hours after drinking.

## ***What if I get sick or need medicine?***

Mother's milk is made to fight the diseases that their babies are exposed to — continue breastfeeding if you are sick. Just make sure that you wash your hands with soap and water before feeding your baby. Also, try not to cough or sneeze in the baby's face while breastfeeding, or any other time you and your baby are close.

Most medicines are safe for breastfeeding mothers and babies if taken as directed. Check with your doctor or breastfeeding specialist before taking any medicines, including the ones you buy without a prescription. Tell your doctor that you are breastfeeding so that a safe medicine can be recommended.

If you have any questions about smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking medications while breastfeeding, please call your breastfeeding (lactation) specialist.

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