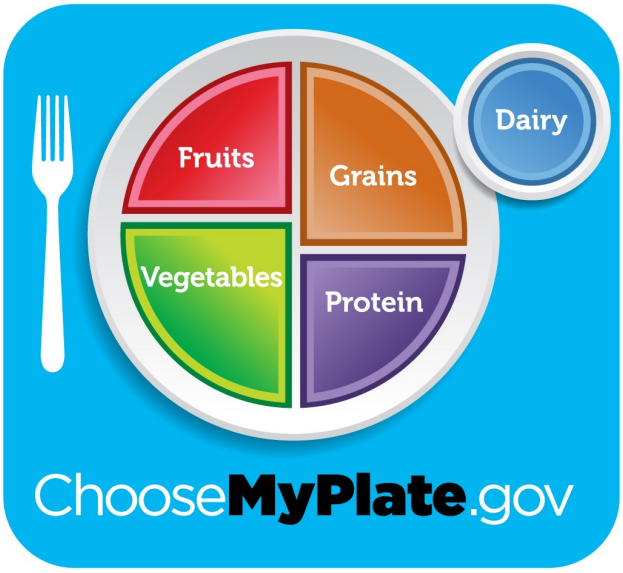
Postpartum Nutrition Guide

Health and Nutrition Guidelines

The first six months after your baby is born is known as the postpartum period. It will take a while to regain your strength after a pregnancy and birth.

It is recommended that you continue your prenatal vitamin for six weeks after the birth of your baby then switch to a multivitamin with folic acid for the rest of your childbearing years.

A balanced and healthy diet is important throughout your life. To learn more about healthy eating go to ChooseMyPlate.gov. Here you will find the tools to stay healthy after having the baby.



Switch to skim or 1% milk
Both have the same amount of calcium and other essential vitamins and nutrients as whole milk, with less fat and calories.

Make at least half of your grains choices whole grain
Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, and pasta.

Vary your protein food choices
Choose lean meats, poultry, fish and other protein sources such as dried beans, nuts, and seeds.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
Choose from fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables.

Physical Activity

- Check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- Daily physical activity can help restore muscle strength and firm up your body.
- Physical activity can raise your energy level and improve your mood.
- If you had a cesarean birth or complications, talk to your doctor about when you can start exercising.

Weight Management

- You can manage your weight after the delivery by eating a balanced diet and through physical activity.
- Setting reasonable goals is key to weight management.
- Cutting 500 calories a day promotes a weight loss of 1 pound per week.
- A healthy weight loss is no more than two pounds per week.

Rest

- Getting enough rest helps you take care of yourself and your baby.
- When possible, sleep when your baby is sleeping.
- The support of family and friends may be helpful in allowing you to get enough rest.

You and Your Baby's Health

- It is important to see your doctor for a 6 week postpartum check-up.
- Talk to your doctor about birth control options and before taking any over-the-counter or prescription medication.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol and drugs. They are harmful to you and your baby.

Water

6 to 8 cups daily

- Drink enough water to satisfy your thirst and prevent dehydration.
- If you drink juice, choose 100% juice and limit to 6 ounces a day.
- If you drink caffeinated beverages such as soft drinks, tea or coffee, limit to 16 ounces or less a day.
- Sugar sweetened beverages and soft drinks can make weight loss more difficult.

Grains

6 to 10 ounces daily

Make half your grain choices whole grains. Grains supply B-vitamins, iron, fiber and energy! Look for 2 or more grams of fiber per serving.

A one ounce serving is:

- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal
- 1 slice whole wheat bread or roll
- ½ cup cooked cereal (oatmeal)
- ½ cup cooked brown rice
- ½ cup cooked pasta
- ½ hot dog or hamburger bun

Fruits and Vegetables

2½ to 3½ cups of vegetables daily
2 to 2½ cups of fruits daily

Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.

Good sources of vitamin C include:

- broccoli
- green pepper
- orange or grapefruit juice
- oranges
- strawberries

Good sources of vitamin A include:

- sweet potatoes
- butternut squash
- cantaloupe
- carrots
- greens
- broccoli

Eating fruits and veggies every day is important for good health!

Meats and Beans

5 to 7 ounces daily

Meats and beans supply iron and protein.

A one ounce serving is:

- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- ¼ cup cooked dry beans, peas or lentils
- 1 tablespoon nuts or seeds
- 1 ounce of lean beef, pork, chicken, turkey or fish

Milk

3 to 4 servings daily

Dairy foods provide protein and calcium for strong bones.

One serving is:

- 6 to 8 ounces yogurt
- 1½ ounces natural cheese
- 8 ounces milk

Non-Dairy Calcium Sources

One serving is:

- ¼ cup whole almonds
- ½ cup turnip greens
- ½ cup calcium fortified fruit juice
- 1 to 3 ounces canned fish with edible bones

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