

# BREASTFEEDING AND LIFESTYLE CHANGES

There is no doubt having a baby changes your life. But what types of changes should be made in lifestyle choices associated with eating habits, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking medications and stress?.

## MOM'S DIET

Some people may say you need to follow a special diet or give up your favorite foods. But research shows this isn't true. All new mothers should eat a healthy diet, but there are no special rules for breastfeeding mothers. You should eat enough to feel full, strong and produce good milk, but if you have a day in which you don't eat a good variety of nutritious foods, you will still produce healthy milk for baby. Occasionally, a baby may be sensitive to something in the mother's diet, but this is very rare. In addition, caffeine may make babies active and cause them to not sleep well. But limiting caffeine intake can usually solve this problem.

If you like spicy foods, that is okay. Breastmilk can be flavored by foods, such as garlic, but studies have shown babies actually like the change in flavors and getting a little variety in their diets, too!

## SMOKING

No one should smoke — period. But if you do, you can still breastfeed. If you need to have a cigarette, smoke it after breastfeeding, and never smoke in the same room with baby. All babies exposed to secondhand smoke will have more ear and respiratory infection regardless of if they are breast or formula fed. Breastfed babies, however, will have more resistance to these illnesses

## DRINKING ALCOHOL

Alcohol goes into your milk, usually in small amounts. It is not considered harmful to baby if the amount and duration are limited. But if you consume alcohol every day in large amounts, you should not breastfeed.

## MEDICATIONS

Medications may pass into the breast milk, so check with your doctor, pediatrician and lactation consultant before starting any medication. The type of medication, dosage and timing can be determined with the help of your healthcare providers.

## STRESS

Breast milk does not spoil or change if mom gets upset, nervous or angry. In fact, nursing helps moms feel more relaxed.

Breastfeeding is good for you, and breast milk is the healthiest food choice for baby!

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Source: Lactation Education Consultants/2012 and "Medications and Mother's Milk," 2010

