



# TOP FOODS TO EAT TO INCREASE BREAST MILK PRODUCTION & WHY BREASTFEEDING IS BEST

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## INTRODUCTION

There is no denying the miracle that is breastfeeding; from the incredible bonding opportunities it allows, to the powerhouse of nutrients it provides; breastfeeding is still to this day incredibly beneficial to both mother and child. We share some tips on getting the most from breastfeeding and what exactly makes it so great.

## TOP FOODS TO EAT TO INCREASE BREAST MILK PRODUCTION

### 1. Water

While breastfeeding you are producing a fluid on top of the normal bodily fluids that such as sweating. Water forms the basis of breastmilk, if you are constantly dehydrated it will be very hard for your body to produce enough breastmilk to satisfy your baby's thirst and to keep your body functioning properly. Studies have shown that nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population are dehydrated at all times.

### 2. Oats

Oats is well known for its milk supply boosting properties. It is also a comfort food that will help you to relax and will increase oxytocin (a hormone involved in milk production) release in your body.

### 3. Spinach

Your total energy, vitamin and mineral needs are increased when you breastfeed. To assist you in meeting increase vitamin and mineral requirements, spinach is a good source of calcium, iron, Vitamin K, A, and folic acid. Folic acid is for the most part important for women who are breastfeeding. Dark leafy green vegetables also contain phytoestrogens. Phytoestrogens are believed to promote breast tissue health and lactation.

### 4. Carrots

Carrots are a not so well known galactagogue (a food that promotes milk production) that also contains phytoestrogens. Carrots are high in beta-carotene and Vitamin A. Carrot juice is particularly good for breastfeeding moms and drinking a cup of carrot juice just before lunch may increase your afternoon breast milk supply.



## 5. Legumes

Legumes (chickpeas, lentils, lima beans, or green beans) are often used as lactogenic foods. Hummus is an ideal convenient snack for breastfeeding moms as it is a complete protein, and the combination of chickpeas and garlic (another galactagogue) makes this nutrient dense snack a top choice for nursing moms.

## 6. Asparagus

Another nutrient dense food that is packed with fibre, folic acid, Vitamins A, C, and K. Asparagus also contains another important amino acid (tryptophan) that may stimulate prolactin (a key hormone involved in lactation) production and subsequently improve milk supply.

## 7. Dried fruit

Dried fruit also serve as a natural galactagogue. Dried apricots also contain phytoestrogens which help to steady the hormones involved in lactation. Calcium-rich dried fruits like figs, apricots, and dates are also thought to help with milk production. Take note: apricots also contain tryptophan.

## 8. Fatty fish

Salmon, sardines, herring, anchovies, trout, mackerel and tuna are great sources of essential fatty acids and omega-3 fatty acids. Essential fatty acids (EFA's) improve mom's nutrition status so that she can produce the hormones necessary for milk production. EFA's are a key ingredient in breast milk. Having more EFA's available will produce fattier, more nutritious, breast milk.

## **BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING FOR THE BABY**

The benefits of breastfeeding extends to not only the baby but to the mother as well. Not only is it completely nutritious and packed with vitamins and minerals it has disease-fighting substances as well. It is recommend worldwide and the first choice of "food" for any baby for the first 6 months of life.

### **Breastfeeding decreases the risk of your baby from different illnesses**

Several studies have proofed that stomach viruses, lower respiratory illnesses, ear infections, and meningitis occur less often in breastfed babies and if it does happen to a much lower severity. No solid food, formula, or water, also known as exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months offer the most protection.

Every mom's breast milk is custom-made for her own baby. The body responds to pathogens (virus and bacteria) that are in your body that creates protection for your baby based on whatever you're exposed to.



Breastfeeding may also decrease the risk of your children developing the following:

- Type 1 and type 2 diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Inflammatory bowel disease.
- Allergies
- Obesity:
  - ✓ Breastfed babies eat until their hunger is satisfied, leading to healthier eating patterns as they grow.
  - ✓ Leptin - a hormone that plays a role in regulating appetite and fat is higher in breastfed babies.
  - ✓ Formula-fed infants gain weight more rapidly in the first weeks of life compared to breastfed babies. This rapid increase in weight is associated with later obesity.

### **Breastfeeding may boost your child's intelligence**

The connection between breastfeeding and cognitive development:

- 17,000 infants followed from birth to 6 1/2 years, researchers concluded from IQ scores and other intelligence tests that prolonged and exclusive breastfeeding significantly improves cognitive development.

The connection between breastfeeding and vocabulary development

- A study on 4,000 children indicated that babies who were breastfed had profoundly higher scores on a vocabulary test at 5 years of age than children who were not breastfed. The longer they have been breastfed the higher were the scores.

### **Breastfeeding may decrease your baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**

Either exclusively or even partly breastfeeding your baby has been associated with decreasing the risk of SIDS. A conclusion was made by researchers that breastfeeding for 1 month of age only can lower the risk of SIDS in half. The U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) endorses breastfeeding for as long as possible to decrease the risk of SIDS.

## **BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING FOR THE MOM**

### **Breastfeeding can decrease your stress levels and your possibility of developing postpartum depression**

The National Institutes of Health came to the conclusion that women who did not breastfeed or who stopped breastfeeding prematurely on had a bigger threat of postpartum\_depression.



### **Cancer – the risk can be decreased with breastfeeding**

Women are protected more from breast and ovarian cancer the longer they breastfeed. It is shown that for reducing the risk of breast cancer you should breastfeeding for at least a year.

### **CONCLUSION**

With such life changing benefits to breastfeeding for both mother and child, it is clear to see why every mother should be encouraged and the practice preserved.

#### **WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?**

The FUTURELIFE® product range including FUTURELIFE® Smart food™, FUTURELIFE® HIGH PROTEIN Smart food™, FUTURELIFE® ZERO Smart food™ and FUTURELIFE® Smart Oats® can all be used as part of a healthy eating plan during pregnancy and breastfeeding. These high energy, high protein products along with their low GI formulation keep your energy levels sustained while warding off the urge to overeat. They also boast 25 vitamins and minerals including Vitamins A, C, Folic acid, Calcium, Iron and Iodine. The FUTURELIFE® range defines convenience, with its unique formulation it allows for an instant meal on-the-go as a shake, smoothie, porridge or even bar.

### **REFERENCES**

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