

# DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR A HEALTHY POSTNATAL DIET



**A Healthy Plate for a Breastfeeding Mother!**

**F FERNANDEZ**  
HOSPITAL



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## Breastfeeding diet

“Your breastfeeding diet” should focus on retaining the nutrient stores as it has an influence on the quality and quantity of breast milk.

Nutritional requirements are maximum during lactation than at any other age in a woman’s life. Hence, the diet should be wisely chosen and balanced.

It is important to gradually lose weight, gained during pregnancy. Use a combination of healthy balanced diet and moderate physical activity to do so.

## Dietary guidelines

1. Eat small meals frequently, preferably every three hours.
2. At every meal, fill half your plate with a variety of colourful fruits and/or vegetables.
3. Make at least half the grains you eat whole-grains, such as whole-wheat rotis, brown rice, whole grain cereal or meal items from jowar, bajra, oats or corn.
4. Intake of toned milk and milk products (up to 500 ml) every day is recommended for calcium requirement.
5. Add at least one serving of dark green leafy vegetables and a serving of fresh vegetable salad every day. Do not cut and wash or soak fruits and vegetables until you are ready to eat them.
6. Take good quality protein foods like eggs, fish, and chicken. Vegetarians can opt for soya nuggets, tofu, paneer and low-fat cheese. Prefer whole grams or beans like chana, rajma, peas, moong, lobia at least one serving a day.
7. Use oil in moderation. Prefer cooking oils such as groundnut oil / ricebran oil / soya bean oil.
8. Include nuts, oil seeds and dry fruits in limited quantities every day. Almonds, walnuts, pistachios, flaxseeds and dried fruits such as dates, figs, prunes, raisins are some of the options.
9. Fluids: Ensure optimal fluid intake every day. Apart from safe drinking water, fresh soups, buttermilk, and coconut water, are the healthier options.
10. Avoid replacing meals with snack foods.

### **Foods to be limited:**

- Beverages like tea, coffee bind dietary iron and make it unavailable. Hence they should be avoided before, during or soon after a meal.
- Pickles, heavily salted foods like chips, pappads as they inhibit iron, calcium absorption.

- Foods that are high in sugar and oil like sweets, soft drinks, chocolates, ghee and baked items.

### Ensure exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months:

- Initial milk (colostrum) is produced in small quantities, but is sufficient for the baby. This is followed by transition milk and then by mature milk.
- Ensure that one breast is completely emptied before offering the other during each feeding session, as the initial (fore) milk satisfies the baby's thirst and the later (hind) milk satisfies the baby's hunger.
- Size of the baby's stomach: Day 1: is 5-7 ml (size of a cherry), Day 3: 22-27 ml (size of a walnut), 1 week: 45-60 ml (size of an apricot), 1 month: 80-150 ml (size of a large egg)
- Milk supply is helped by frequent breastfeeds including night feeds, being relaxed and skin to skin contact.
- A balanced diet is the best way to improve the quality of milk.
- Mothers who exclusively breastfeed for at least 6 months may return to pre-pregnancy weight more easily than mothers who do not breastfeed.

### Physical activity:

Exercise regularly and be physically active. Include 45 to 60 minutes per day of exercise in short spans.

## Sample diet plan for postnatal women\* (2200 Kcal approx)

**Early morning:** Milk – 1 cup / tea / coffee

**Breakfast:** Idly (3) / Pesarattu (2) / Veg upma (1<sup>1/2</sup> cup) + chutney (2 tbsp) + 1 cup sambar OR Chapatti (2) + vegetable curry OR Whole grain breakfast cereal (40g) with milk (200ml) + Egg (1) / Paneer (30g)

**Mid-morning:** Soya milk / Ragi malt 150ml + Fruits (1 cup)

**Lunch:** Vegetable salad (1 cup) + phulka (2) + Brown rice (1/2 cups) + Non veg Proteins - Lean meat or Chicken (50 grams) / Veg Proteins - meal maker / Paneer (30 grams) + green leafy vegetables (1 cup) + other vegetables (1 cup) + curd / (yoghurt) – 100 ml

**3.00 pm:** Fruit (1) + Soya milk (150 ml) / Milk (150ml) / buttermilk – 200 ml

**Evening:** Oats (2 tbsp) / Ragi malt (2 tbsp) + Boiled Sprouts (1/2 cup)

**7.00 pm:** Veg. soup (1 bowl)

**Dinner:** Phulkas / bajra roti / jowar roti (80g flour) + green leafy vegetables (1 cup) + other vegetables (1 cup) + Non veg Proteins - Minced meat / fish (50 grams) / Veg Proteins - Soya granules (1/2 cup) / Dal (1/2 cup) + Curd (100 ml)

**Bed-time:** Milk (1 cup) + Nuts (8 - 10 nos.)

**Note:** 1 cup = 200ml. Use 30g of fats or oil and < 5g salt during preparation of meal per day.

## BALANCED DIET – 2200kcal approx



### CEREALS AND MILLETS (GRAINS)

Make at least half your grains whole.  
Choose 100% whole grains. **10 portions (1 portion = 30 gms)**

### MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS (DAIRY)

Get your calcium-rich foods. Select fat-free or 3% milk. 500ml/day. **5 portions (1 portion = 100 ml)**



### FRUITS

Prefer fresh cut fruits rather than juices.  
**2 portions (1 portion = 100 gms)**



### PROTEIN FOODS

Go lean with protein. Fish, pulses, beans and lean meat and poultry are great sources.  
**4 portions (1 portion = 30 gms)**

### VEGETABLES **4 portions (1 portion = 100 gms)**

Vegetables and green leafy vegetables: 3 portions × 100 gms. Roots and Tubers: 1 portion × 100gms



### FATS / OIL AND SUGAR

Limit use of this food group: Oil **6 portions (1 portion = 5 gms)**  
Sugar: **4 portions (1 portion = 5 gms)**

## BREASTFEEDING MYTHS & FACTS

MYTHS	FACTS
Jaundice in the newborn baby is due to certain items in the mother's diet.	Jaundice in babies is unrelated to mother's diet.
Eating more bread and milk will increase milk production.	A balanced diet should be eaten to improve milk quality.
Fruits and vegetables should be avoided.	Fruits and vegetables contain important vitamins and minerals.
Baby needs extra water in hot season in first six months of life.	Breast milk is rich in water, so breastfed babies do not need additional water.
Whole grams and dal should be avoided.	They are good sources of protein; especially for vegetarians.

Review after 6 weeks. For a detailed nutrition counseling and prescription by our team of nutritionists, call +91 40 40222397 for an appointment.  
For any queries, please e-mail us at [nutrition@fernandez.foundation](mailto:nutrition@fernandez.foundation)