

PROBLEM FOODS DURING BREASTFEEDING

There are really no problem foods that should be avoided while breastfeeding. However, a few should be consumed in limited amounts.

Caffeinated beverages and food

Caffeine is a stimulant present in coffee, tea, cola beverages, chocolate, and some prescription and over-the-counter medications.

A small amount of caffeine does pass through breast milk to your baby. This can cause your baby to be irritable and have trouble sleeping. If you wish to include caffeine in your diet while breastfeeding, keep the levels moderate—no more than 400 mg/day (the equivalent of 4 cups of coffee per day). Instead of caffeinated beverages, choose milk, juice or water.

Herbal teas

Herbal teas can be enjoyable and healthful, warm beverages during breastfeeding. Most are caffeine-free. However, the composition and safety of herbal teas is often unknown. Herbs can affect your baby because they are passed into your breast milk. Be sure to use only herbal teas that are considered safe. Some examples include:

- ✓ citrus peel
- ✓ ginger
- ✓ lemon balm
- ✓ orange peel
- ✓ rose hip
- ✓ blackberry

Turn over...

Examples of unsafe herbs include:

- x aloe
- x buckthorn
- x burdock
- x cascara
- x chamomile
- x cohosh
- x coltsfoot
- x comfrey
- x cornsilk
- x dong quai
- x ephedra
- x eucalyptus
- x fenugreek
- x feverfew

- x ginseng
- x goldenseal
- x hawthorne berries
- x horseradish
- x licorice
- x lobelia
- x pennyroyal
- x pokeroot
- x sassafras
- x senna
- x St. John's wort
- x wormwood
- x yarrow

Herbal teas should be limited to two 8 oz. cups per day, and should not replace other nutritious beverages in your diet. If you are unsure about the safety of a particular tea, contact a dietitian at the Middlesex-London Health Unit (663-5317) for more information.

Alcohol

Although the occasional drink may not be harmful, it is best not to consume alcohol while breastfeeding. Alcohol passes through your breast milk to your baby in a similar concentration to that in your blood. Excessive alcohol consumption inhibits the let-down reflex and can cause drowsiness in your baby. If you choose to drink alcohol, drink only occasionally (once/week) and have one serving (e.g. 8 oz beer, 4 oz wine, 1 oz liquor) per occasion. Since alcohol is quickly absorbed by your body and passes into breast milk, drink after breastfeeding your baby and allow approximately two hours before your next feeding.