

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

TAKING CARE OF YOU AFTER BABY ARRIVES

A new baby brings many changes. Taking care of yourself will give you energy to keep up with your baby. Try these healthy lifestyle tips:

FEEL GOOD

- **Celebrate yourself** as a mom. Having a baby is a great achievement. Be thankful for your skills, relationships and interests.
- **Make time for yourself** and find a balance between commitments, family and friends. Take at least 15 minutes each day to do things like take a quiet bath or read a book.
- **Focus on the best possible you.** Accept who you are and focus on your strengths and abilities. Your health is more important than a number on a scale.
- **Make sleep a priority.** Sleep when baby sleeps. Aim for seven to nine hours total each day, even if it is only one to three hours at a time.
- **Pause** before comparing yourself to anyone, including celebrities. Think of your experiences and be proud of who you are.
- **Go easy on yourself.** Good health comes in many body shapes and sizes.

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

- **The benefits of being active** include more energy, better sleep and less stress.
- **Talk to a health care provider** about becoming active after delivery.

- **Start small** and gradually increase to 150 minutes a week (e.g. 30 minutes, five days per week).
- **Listen to your body.** Stop and rest if you feel unwell. Get medical attention if needed.
- **Do the talk test.** If you are breathing too hard to talk comfortably, slow down.
- **Enjoy the outdoors.** Take a walk with family or friends.
- **Join a parent group** or recreation program with stroller walking, yoga or dance classes.
- **Find an activity you enjoy.** You'll be more likely to be active more often.
- **Warm up** before physical activity; **cool down** and **stretch** after physical activity.

EAT WELL

- **Eat three meals a day and eat healthy snacks** to keep up energy levels.
- **Enjoy a variety of foods** from all four food groups in [Canada's Food Guide](#) and take a multivitamin with folic acid.
- **Fill half your plate with fruit or vegetables.** Try meatless dishes like bean salad, stir-fry tofu or lentil soup more often.
- **Drink water** especially before, during and after you are active. Slices of lime or cucumber add flavour. Breastfeeding moms may feel thirstier since their bodies are making breastmilk.
- **Plan ahead** and make a menu. You will be more likely to make healthier choices.

PUBLIC HEALTH

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york.ca/feedingkids

- **Make the healthy choice the easy choice.** Cut and store vegetables and fruit for easy snacks, and doubling recipes to freeze.
- **Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are satisfied.** Breastfeeding moms may feel hungrier since their bodies are making breastmilk.
- **Enjoy your food.** Sit down and take time to enjoy each bite. It takes your body about 20 minutes to feel satisfied.
- **Write down what you eat** if you want to know how much you are eating or try the free [EATracker](#) app by Dietitians of Canada.
- **Beware of sugar-sweetened beverages** like iced tea, coffee, energy drinks and pop.
- **Diets don't work.** Quick fixes rarely work and can be harmful to your health. Focus on being active and eating well.
- **There is no special diet when breastfeeding** however some things you eat and drink can affect the amount of certain nutrients in your breastmilk.
 - **Include** sources of **omega-3 fats** (fortified eggs, fatty fish such as arctic char, salmon, sardines, Rainbow trout), **vitamin B₁₂** (milk, milk products, meat, eggs), **folic acid** (beans, lentils, dark green vegetables,) and **vitamin D** (milk, fortified soy beverage, fatty fish).
 - **Avoid** sources of **trans fats** (shortening or foods made with it, packaged cookies or crackers, bakery food such as pastries, muffins and croissants), **high mercury fish** (fresh or frozen tuna, swordfish, pickerel, shark, orange roughy) and **more than 300 mg per day of caffeine** (about two 250 mL or 8 oz cups of coffee). Speak to a health care provider about herbs or herbal tea safety.

QUICK AND EASY MEALS AND SNACK IDEAS

Breakfast

- Peanut butter shake: blend one cup (250 mL) milk, one frozen banana, one teaspoon (5 mL) vanilla and two tablespoons (30 mL) peanut butter.

- Microwaved eggs: Crack two eggs in a mug and beat the egg white and yolk well. Cook for one to one and-a-half minutes or until fully cooked. Enjoy with toast and fruit.
- Yogurt, fruit slices and a whole grain muffin.
- Berries or diced fruit on plain oatmeal with milk or low-fat yogurt with granola.
- Any leftovers from the previous day.

Lunch and dinner

- Turkey roll-up: place two ounces (50 grams) sliced turkey and a lettuce leaf on pita bread. Add a carrot stick and roll up.
- Bean salad and fruit yogurt.
- Cottage cheese with fruit and a bran muffin.
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich.
- Salad with boiled egg or sliced meat.
- Egg or tuna salad sandwich and pepper strips.
- Beef vegetable soup with cheese and crackers.
- Lentil soup, naan and vegetable sticks.

Snacks

- Trail mix with nuts, seeds and dried fruit.
- Vegetable sticks or pita with hummus.
- Apple slices with peanut butter.
- Fresh fruit and vanilla or plain yogurt.
- Banana bread with almond butter.
- Cereal and milk.

Add a cup of low-fat milk or fortified-soy beverage to these ideas for added nutrition.

GET SUPPORT

Self-care with a new baby is not always easy. Call Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 to get support on how to take care of you and your baby.

For online information, visit york.ca/parenting or the [Best Start Resource Centre](#)

To speak to a registered dietitian at no cost, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or visit unlockfood.ca

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