

FOODS FOR MOTHERS & TIPS FOR THE POSTPARTUM COOK

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Enjoy the following "Secrets" for the first 1½ - 3 Months after childbirth.

According to Ayurveda, following childbirth, there is a **unique 42 day window** which calls for special Mother and Baby care. A newly delivered mother **is as delicate as her baby in body, mind, and emotions** during these first six weeks postpartum! If there has been a caesarian section or other complications, add about 10 days for recovery. Comfort, bonding, lactation, happiness, and health are strongly impacted. Around the world, similar windows and traditions are found.

It is important for the Mom to understand that taking good care of herself is taking care of her baby. If Mom is sick or hurt, the baby suffers - if Mom goes without, the baby goes without.

The uniqueness of the postpartum window needs to be understood by mothers and their spouses. It is beyond personal or selfish concern; it is a responsibility to family and community to see that this window for deep rejuvenation is properly supported. Otherwise the cost may not only result in colic and depression, but many other common physiological problems may arise which are damaging to the happiness of everyone.

+ Focus on the following:

- Warm
- Slow
- Quiet
- Soft
- Stable/steady
- Simple
- Repetition
- Mothering/nourishing/rich
- Oily
- Moisture
- Heavy

- Avoid the following:

- Cold
- Quick
- Noise
- Rough
- Hard
- Change
- Movement
- Empty
- Subtle
- Dry
- Light

Foods for Successful Lactation and Rejuvenation

~ Proper digestion is the root of good health ~

*After delivery, the digestive power is diminished;
a new mother's digestive system is very delicate and her needs are great.*

Choices of foods and how a mother digests her food have a great deal to do with the quality of her breast milk, avoiding depression and colic, and the quality of her rejuvenation, strength, comfort, and natural expression of mothering.

Appropriate nutrition for mom postpartum, will help minimize difficulties for a breastfeeding baby. Dry or hard to digest foods that Mom ingests can create dryness, cramping and gas pains in babies.

The following suggestions are guidelines, please only follow what seems doable; the more the better, however, no need to think that we have to follow this 100% in order to make a difference - making one change is better than none.

~ Preferred Foods During Postpartum ~

Fresh - Warm - Oily - Soupy - Moist - Nourishing - Delicious - Creamy - Digestible

Preferred Proteins

- Boiled warm milk
- Milk puddings w/o egg
- Split lentils soaked overnight made into thin soup, perhaps
- Almond or other nut milks
- Nuts or seeds, well soaked (24 - 48 hours) for snack or prepared with soups, vegetables, grains, or sauces
- Yogurt or buttermilk drink thinned half with water and seasoned with desired spices
- Ricotta, cottage and other unfermented cheeses
- Chicken and fish soups after about 4 weeks for non-vegetarians

Preferred Carbohydrates

- Basmati rice (cook with an extra ½-1 cup water per cup of rice)
- Unleavened wheat such as couscous, pastas, chapattis (unleavened tortillas)
- Grains such as oats, quinoa and amaranth.
- Favor less refined sugars such as honey, succanat, turbinado, and especially iron rich sweeteners such as dates, raisins, molasses and dark Indian Jaggery if available.

Preferred Vegetables

Prepare all vegetables until tender, season well and enjoy with healthy oils (sesame, sunflower, walnut, avocado, almond) or butter

- Artichoke
- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Beet
- Carrot
- Fresh dill and fennel
- Okra
- Pumpkin and winter squashes
- Yams or sweet potatoes

After the first three weeks postpartum, the following vegetables can be introduced; summer squashes, green beans, broccoli, peeled eggplant, spinach or chard cooked with plenty oil, seasoning, salt, and lime or lemon juice.

Preferred Fats

Use healthy fats and oils more abundantly than normal. This is important for optimal rejuvenation. Fats are building blocks for hormones and are important support and functional components of the cell membrane. Research show that low blood lipids are associated with depression and low hormone levels.

Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs - Omega 3, 6, and 9) are, as the name indicates, essential to the body, mind and nervous system. The brain does not produce enough of these important oils, and if we get depleted, we are likely to suffer from anxiety, restlessness, and depression. Furthermore, low breast milk production and engorgement has been linked to low EFAs. The brain is more than 60% fat and needs a lot of healthy oils for its health.

- Flax seed oil
- Ghee (clarified butter)
- Butter
- Sesame, toasted sesame, and sunflower oils
- Coconut and olive oil in the summer

Preferred Fruits & Fruit Guidelines

- Iron rich fruits (soaked or stewed dried fruits such as figs, dates, raisins, prunes)
- Sweet and fresh (not chilled) and freshly squeezed sweet fruit juices
- Coconut milk is a great substitute for sauces made on milk and cream
- Always enjoy fruits by themselves. Most fruit ferments if taken with other foods.

~ AVOID the Following Foods As Much as Possible ~

Cold Foods and Drinks

Ice cream, salads, ice water. We can cool hot blooded or hot flashing moms with fennel, coriander, cumin, a little mint and chamomile

Caffeine

Coffee, Black Tea, Green Tea, Chocolate

Heavy Foods

Red meats, fermented cheeses, cold foods, homogenized, pasteurized, and/or non-organic milk, sour cream, yogurt, eggs, fried foods (sautéing is fine)

Dried or Drying foods

Dried fruits, chips, crackers, toast, beans, millet, buckwheat and white potatoes

Fermented Foods and Drinks

Alcohol, soy sauce, vinegar, pickles, tempeh, miso, hard cheeses, mushrooms, and old leftovers.

Rough Foods

Salad and other raw foods, onion, radish, cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts

Sharp Pungent Foods

Cayenne Pepper, Chili, Jalapeno, Garlic (dry, raw, or undercooked)

Hydrogenated or most cooked vegetable oils (due to trans-fatty acids)

Taking Milk with Sour, Salt or Astringent taste (eggs, cultured dairy, all meats, vegetables and most fruits)

Milk digests best when boiled (the boiling simplifies the protein molecules). Milk can be taken with unsalted grains, puddings, sweet tastes such as dates and dried figs (these act differently from other fruits). Enjoy milk warm with honey and spices such as ginger, cardamom, clove, and saffron.

Cooking with Honey is proven to create toxic accumulations over time in the body. Raw or drinkably warm is fine.

Leavenings – yeast, baking powder and soda

Rushed or irritated atmosphere in cooking, serving and eating - weakens digestion