

CHAPTER 7: DIET OF A LACTATING MOTHER

Mother who is breast-feeding her child has to eat for two. It is essential that she take balanced nutritious diet. In this period apart from calories and proteins, there is increased need of calcium and iron. Therefore, keep the following in mind:

- ✓ Include all food groups in daily diet. These groups are cereals, pulses, ghee-oil, sugar, jaggery, vegetables, fruits, milk and its products, condiments.
- ✓ Let her consume more foods containing iron like green leafy vegetables, black sesame seeds (til), raisins, jaggery, poha etc.
- ✓ Let her consume more foods containing calcium like milk & its product, white sesame seeds (til), ragi, guava, bajra etc. Daily consumption of one liter of milk in any form e.g., as curd, yoghurt, paneer, kheer etc provides all calcium and good quality protein needed.
- ✓ Do not restrict diet. Full stomach should be had when hungry. 3 to 4 meals should be had. Discard beliefs of 'hot' foods; 'cold' foods.

Do mother's diet effect baby?

Generally people advise lactating women in India a lot of food restrictions like pulses, vegetables with seeds, pickles etc, but there is not much truth in these ideas. Lactating women should take all foods consumed at home.

If some food causes symptoms, stop it for 15 days. Symptoms will stop & on restarting that food item, they will reappear. If such a relation is found with any food then it should be stopped. Otherwise, there are no grounds to stop any food.

- ⊗ Foods that may cause symptoms in a child include milk, eggs, cocoa, wheat, sour fruit, groundnuts, tomatoes, onions, cabbages, spices, & berries. Symptoms include colic diarrhea & skin allergy
- ☛* Similarly, mother's habits like alcohol, smoking etc can adversely affect the baby.