

LACTATION

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends breastfeeding exclusively from 1-6 months and then breastfeeding in addition to table food from 6-24 months.

Breastmilk is more than just food.

Extended breastfeeding contributes to a child's health, providing important antibodies. It has shown to contribute to intellectual development (cognitive achievement) and also mental and social development. When you meet your child's needs in a consistent way you are laying the groundwork for healthy attachment and independence.

What about me?

There are also benefits to the mother including delayed return of fertility, lower risk of breast cancer, lower risk of endometrial cancer and ovarian cancer, protection against osteoporosis, reduced risk of rheumatoid arthritis, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and last but not least you can lose weight easier.

Some facts about breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding for the first six months is crucial. Breastfeeding protects infants from childhood diseases. Breastfeeding also benefits the mother. Breastfeeding has long-term benefits for children. Infant formula does not contain the antibodies found in breast milk. Support for mothers is essential.

Why am I still breastfeeding my toddler?

Breastfeeding past a year of age continues to have many benefits to both baby and mother. Breastmilk is a source of nutrition and disease protection the entire time a child breastfeeds.

For example:

In the second year (12-23 months), 448 mL of breastmilk provides:

29% of energy (calorie) requirements

43% of protein requirements

36% of calcium requirements

75% of vitamin A requirements

76% of folate requirements

94% of vitamin B12 requirements

60% of vitamin C requirements

Note: My information was obtained from www.kellymom.com and the World Health Organization.

Essential Oils

Now, let's move on to the fun stuff...how you can use essential oils while breastfeeding! First rule is that I don't suggest putting oils directly onto your nipples because this can cause nipple aversion for baby if they don't enjoy the taste or if the smell is just a little too strong. The only caveat is when you are treating cracked nipples, in which case you will want to gently wipe off your nipples before feeding.

Second rule is to always dilute your essential oils before using them. Why? Because they are powerful! Women's bodies often react differently during pregnancy, postpartum, and lactation than they do normally. I always prefer to err on the side of caution during these times, because who wants to deal with a skin reaction when they are also dealing with something like cracked nipples, right? With that said, some of my favorite oils to use to increase milk supply are clary sage, fennel (do not use longer than 10 days at a time), basil, and geranium. You can use any of these along with a carrier oil like fractionated coconut oil, almond oil, or olive oil.

More Milk Blend

2 drops fennel

4 drops of clary sage

add to 10ml roller bottle

Fill to top with fractionated coconut oil

Apply to breast excluding nipple area after nursing (to encourage milk flow for next feeding)

Essential oils are also helpful when you experience cracked nipples. Of course, the cause for the cracked nipples should always be addressed as well (oftentimes a bad latch is to blame). Just put a teaspoon or so of olive oil in your palm and add a drop of lavender essential oil, rub palms together to mix and add a little warmth, and apply to nipple area after a feeding.

Mastitis Blend

10 drops Melaleuca

10 drops Lavender

5 drops Roman Chamomile

Mix with 2 tablespoons of fractionated coconut oil

Massage from armpits toward the nipple area

I think that relaxation and comfort are also a huge factor in successful breastfeeding, so don't forget to implement some relaxing self-care routines during postpartum. One of my favorites for new moms is a relaxing bath. Make sure you close any windows and doors (anything that could cause a chill). Start filling the bath with warm water and apply 4-6 drops of lavender or wild orange (or both) essential oil to the walls of the shower/bathtub. You will experience the oils diffusing into the air because of the warmth of the room, and it's heavenly! You can even bring your little one into the bath with you. Just be sure to support their head and you can let their body float in the water; it's relaxing and soothing for baby too and great bonding time for you both.

Essential oils, when used properly can greatly enhance the breastfeeding and overall postpartum experience. So, give it a try! Integrate these powerful little drops into your life today.

Oatmeal Raisin Chocolate Chip Lactation Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup butter	2 cups flour
1 cup sugar (can reduce if wanted)	1 tsp baking soda
1 cup brown sugar	1 tsp salt
4 Tbsp water	3 cups oats
2 Tbsp flax seed meal	3 Tbsp brewer's yeast
2 eggs	1 cup chocolate chip (optional)
1 tsp vanilla	1/2 cup raisins (optional)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350. Mix the flax seed meal and water and let sit for 3-5 min. Beat the butter, sugar and brown sugar well. Add eggs and mix well. Add flax seed mix and vanilla, mix well. In a medium bowl mix together flour, brewer's yeast, baking soda and salt. Add dry ingredients to the butter mix. Stir in oats, chips and raisins. Scoop onto baking sheet. Bake for 12 minutes. Let sit for a couple minutes and then enjoy!

This recipe made 3 dozen cookies, enough for you and to share with another lactating friend. These make a great gift for a new-mommy by the way. It's the brewer's yeast and oatmeal that help with milk supply and the flaxseed meal is a great way to get fiber and omega 3 fatty acids. Omega 3's are good for you and your baby. :)