

# *Dietary Tips for Nursing Mothers\*\**

Significant hormonal shifts go on in your body when your milk comes in for the first time, and this is often compounded by difficulties in establishing a nursing routine. Midwives jokingly refer to the forgetfulness and moodiness many new mothers experience as "milk-brain." Some women become weepy during this time. Be patient and expect the nursing relationship to take a few weeks to establish.

Avoid acidic and gas-producing foods for the first few weeks postpartum. Colic—inconsolable crying that can last for hours at a time—has been linked to gastrointestinal distress, and often responds well to the elimination of certain foods from the nursing mother's diet. To be on the safe side, avoid all of the following in the first month to three months of your baby's life:

- Alcohol
- Brewer's yeast
- Carbonated beverages
- Chocolate and other caffeine-containing foods
- Most dairy products and other foods containing lactose (milk sugar). Hard cheeses, butter, and yogurt with live cultures have very little to no lactose, and should be all right as long as you are not allergic to the milk protein casein.
- Gas-forming vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and the like)
- Oranges and orange juice
- Strawberries

After those initial weeks, you can try having these foods again, one at a time, to see if your baby reacts to them. Add only one food back every two or three days so that you can discern your baby's reaction easily. If s/he becomes colicky or develops a skin rash or redness around his/her anus, s/he may have sensitivity to the food. If that happens, wait a few more weeks before trying it again. By the time your baby is about three months old\*, his/her digestive system should be mature enough to deal with most of the foods you eat. However, acidic fruits such as oranges and strawberries could cause your baby to develop rashes for as long as he is nursing. If your baby is colicky in spite of your having eliminated all the above foods, try eliminating all grains except rice for a week to see if that helps. Some babies react to foods that contain gluten, a protein found in wheat, oats, rye, amaranth, and spelt.

\*Please note that if your baby is born premature, you count their maturity date from their due date and not the date they were born.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Herb Pharm (<http://herb-pharm.com>) sells formulas that are wonderful for soothing poor digestion of breast milk, infant formula or insufficient development of the baby's digestive system. For mom to improve digestibility of breast milk, she can consume Herb Pharm's Peppermint Spirits or Fennel Extract.

As children grow, I recommend every home create a kit that contains Herb Pharm:

- Lemon Balm
- Children's Herbal Compound
- Children's Echinacea Glycerite
- Children's Winter Health Compound
- Mullein/Garlic Compound Soothing Ear Oil
- Black Elderberry Glycerite

\*\*Please Note: This document is not meant to diagnose, treat or cure any medical condition. The information contained is educational. For medical care, see a licensed health care practitioner.