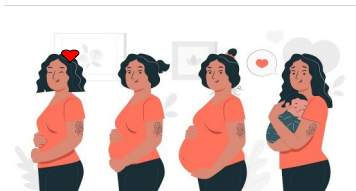


THE FIRST 1000 DAYS: WHAT ARE THEY? WHY DO THEY MATTER ANYWAY?



The first 1000 days are the period between conception and two years of life of the child and represent the most important period to positively influence his future health status, intervening with primary prevention on noncommunicable diseases (e.g. cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, obesity, type 2 diabetes).

Already before birth, in fact, next to the genetic component, on which at the moment not much can be done, there is the influence of environmental and epigenetic factors, including the nutrition and physical activity of the mother, which are involved in the brain, immune and metabolic development of the child.

It is therefore of fundamental importance to adopt and/or maintain correct lifestyles, which can then be transmitted to the child to make him grow well.

Image: storyset on Freepik

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE:

GET INFORMED ON OFFICIAL WEBSITES

www.ifmed.org/

<https://www.first1000days.ie/>

<https://thousanddays.org/>



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images: Freepik.com

FEEDING DURING BREASTFEEDING

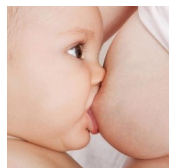


During breastfeeding, the woman must pay great attention to her nutrition, driven by a very important goal: the health of her baby. This creates the opportunity to adopt or maintain a healthy diet within the family context.

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The benefits of breastfeeding for both the mother and the baby are well documented: the WHO recommends it, in all cases where there are no situations of impossibility,

exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of the baby's life, as breastfed babies have been shown to have a lower risk of respiratory infections and gastrointestinal disorders and to develop overweight or obesity in adulthood, while breastfeeding mothers have greater protection against breast cancer.



Breast milk has an inimitable composition, which changes not only according to the age of the baby, but also within the breastfeeding itself, to adapt to the nutritional needs of the new-born; it contains not only nutrients (proteins, fats and carbohydrates) but also immune cells, hormones and bacterial flora, necessary for the good growth of the baby.

The composition of milk is influenced by maternal nutrition; for this reason it will be important to continue to follow a healthy diet, inspired by principles of the Mediterranean diet and without special prohibitions except the consumption of alcoholic beverages and the limitation of caffeine, as in pregnancy.



Please also note the need to abstain from smoking.

Breastfeeding also **favours the loss of weight gained in pregnancy**, since milk production is a process that involves an important caloric expenditure. It will therefore be possible to **maintain the increase of about 500 kcal/day** (compared to before pregnancy) that had been added in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy **for the first 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding**, following for example these indications:

* increase the portion of preferably whole-grain carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, breakfast cereals, polenta, potatoes, distributing them between breakfast lunch and dinner (increase of about 20-30 g per meal per day) and eat fruit and vegetables daily

* take a protein source both at lunch and dinner, taking care to prefer legumes, small fish, white meat, eggs and lean dairy products, and introduce an additional protein source, for example at breakfast or in one of the snacks (such as a glass of milk or a white yogurt)



* to ensure the correct intake of omega 3 fats, consumption should be encouraged of small oily fish for at least 1-2 servings per week



* consume a small portion of oily nuts (walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds... not salted) every day (about 15 g) or a larger portion several times a week.



To compensate for losses due to milk production, **water consumption** should be increased to at least **10 glasses per day**, compared to 6-8 for women of childbearing age.



Finally, the following beliefs around breastfeeding are to be debunked:

- *“Drinking Beer or Cow's Milk Increases Milk production”*

alcohol should be excluded from the diet of a breastfeeding mother.



- *“Tasty foods such as onion, garlic, asparagus, spices or vegetables of the cabbage family increase colic in the infant”*

compatible with the principles of the **Mediterranean diet**, it is instead **recommended to consume all the food that is typical of the cuisine of your own culture**, to accustom the child from breastfeeding to appreciate a wide range of tastes, facilitating him in the introduction of solid foods in the complementary feeding phase and, subsequently, during growth

- *“After six months, milk is no longer needed because it becomes water”*

WHO recommends that breast milk remain **the priority choice even after the start of complementary feeding**, up to two years of life and beyond, and in any case as long as mother and child wish.