

Breast Feeding The Right Way

The Ultimate Guide For Nursing Moms On
The Basics Of Breastfeeding, Producing More
Milk For Their Babies, And Being More
Confident Mothers Overall



Sarah J. Taylor

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*professionals for your health care and the health care of
your baby.*

Chapter 1: Breastfeeding Basics

The joy of being a mother to a newborn is indescribable. Despite the feeling you get when you've just given birth, motherly concerns arise, and one of them is breastfeeding. Thanks to biology, women have a natural food source for their babies stored right in their breasts.

Breastfeeding is natural as well, but many mothers get frustrated and overly concerned about it. A few common questions that mothers ask about breastfeeding include:

- “Is my baby getting enough milk?”
- “Is my baby latching on well?”
- “Does it hurt to breastfeed?”
- “How long should I breastfeed, and when should I breastfeed?”
- “What if I have a low supply of breast milk and my baby's not getting enough?”

In *Breastfeeding The Right Way*, you'll learn all you need to know about breastfeeding, how to deal with common breastfeeding problems, such as low breast milk supply, and much more. As a mother, you owe it to yourself and your little one to be well-informed about breastfeeding.

What You Need to Know About Breastfeeding

Let's kick off your breastfeeding education by learning about how breastfeeding works and other information through the mini guide presented below:

The Breastfeeding Mini Guide Part 1: How Breast Milk is Produced

Breast milk – nature's go-to baby food – is an essential part of your baby's growth. Breast milk starts to produce during your pregnancy. The changes you go through during pregnancy aren't just to support your baby in your womb. Your breasts are one area of your body that changes the most, and the bumps on your areola become larger and more prominent. These bumps secrete oil so that your breasts and nipples stay protected from drying and cracking while you're breastfeeding.

Your breasts are made up of fatty tissues and milk making glands called alveoli. When your body is ready to produce milk, it does so in the alveoli. When your baby begins to breastfeed, the alveoli release milk into a series of milk ducts, this is called the letdown reflex. The milk travels through the ducts to the nipple openings, where your baby draws it out. As your baby removes your milk, the cycle starts all over again to replenish your supply.

<p>Did You Know? Your nipples have 15-20 openings each, which are the outlets for your breast milk.</p>

The Breastfeeding Mini Guide Part Two: Position and Latch

Breastfeeding isn't as simple as placing your nipple in your baby's mouth. Positioning and latching are crucial parts of breastfeeding, and, to help you out, here are steps to getting the perfect position and latch:

1. Find a comfortable spot, and lay your baby between your breasts while you're lying down or sitting up. This position comforts and relaxes your baby, so this would be a good start to breastfeeding. If possible, remove your shirt and your baby's clothing for skin-to-skin contact, making breastfeeding a more intimate moment for you and your little one.
2. Guide your baby gently to your nipple while supporting his or her head with one hand and your breast with the other.
3. Use your hand to guide your breast toward your baby's upper lip, tickling it with your nipple to signal that it's time to feed. You can also brush your nipple across your baby's cheek to let him or her know that it's feeding time.
4. Bring your baby to your breast when he or she opens his mouth. Some mothers lean in toward their babies when they open their mouth, but bringing your baby to you is more effective; you'll also get a better latch on. Your baby should have his or her mouth around your areola, which is a sign of a good latch.

5. Hold your baby close to you, and make sure his or her nose is touching your breast.

6. Make sure your baby has a good latch by feeling his or her mouth and tongue pulling your breast. If you feel him sucking on your nipple only, then that's a sign of a bad latch. Readjust if you need to by gently inserting your pinky finger between your breast and your baby's mouth. If breastfeeding starts to feel painful and sore, that's also a sign that your baby doesn't have a good latch on your breast. Readjust the position as needed.

Getting a good latch will take practice, but remember to be patient. You'll get the perfect latch soon enough!

Nursing Tip: Determine a permanent nursing area in your home, whether it's in the nursery or in the living room. Not only will a designated nursing area set the mood for your breastfeeding session, but it'll also become a familiar place for you and your baby, making it easier to relax. Be sure to keep the area safe and clean.

The Breastfeeding Mini Guide Part Three: FAQs About Breastfeeding

Every mom who is new to breastfeeding will naturally have questions about it, and answers to the most commonly asked questions are below. Be sure to go through them even if you know the answers already so that you can get the information to stick in your mind.

FAQ #1: How long should I breastfeed my baby?

A mother and her baby should breastfeed for as long as they wish to breastfeed. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends you should breastfeed (exclusive) for at least 6 months and then continue breastfeeding combined with solid foods for 12-24 months or for as long as mother and baby desire. As solids are introduced, your baby will shift his/her primary source of nutrition from your milk to other foods.

FAQ #2: Is it easy to breastfeed?

Every mom is different, but, if you have a hard time with breastfeeding in the beginning, that doesn't mean that you're incapable of doing it. Breastfeeding does take practice, and countless moms struggle with it. Before your baby is born, you can practice how you'll hold your newborn and plan out how you'll get him or her to latch on to your breast perfectly. You can also practice during the times your baby isn't breastfeeding.

Be patient in your practices so that your baby gets all the breast milk possible. Also, find online and offline communities in your area that center around helping moms who have newborns. The support of others can help you get through the tough times with breastfeeding as well as other obstacles you'll face as a mother.

FAQ #3: How do I prepare for breastfeeding?

The first step is to keep yourself healthy. Your breast milk is made of nutrients found in your body, so make it a habit to eat healthy meals and drink plenty of water. The second step is to familiarize yourself

with breastfeeding and feeding your baby in general so that you know how to handle the situation better.

FAQ #4: Is it okay to breastfeed in public?

This is a tricky question with a gray area. Society and mothers have controversial views on breastfeeding in public. To answer this question simply, it depends on where you live. Some locations may have a law against breastfeeding in public, so it's best to check country, state or city laws to ensure that you can breastfeed in public. Your decision to breastfeed in public also depends on how you feel about it. If you're afraid that your baby will be hungry while you're going out, you can breastfeed before you go, or you can take a light cloth with you, such as a muslin, to cover up your baby while you breastfeed. Make sure that your baby can breathe easily, though, so he or she doesn't feel stuffy. You can also breastfeed in your car rather than outside if you're running errands.

If you're told you can't breastfeed somewhere, don't feel discouraged – just know your rights. You may feel that someone doesn't understand that you're a mother and you have a hungry baby, but don't let anyone bring you down or make you feel insecure about breastfeeding. It's completely natural – at least, to you it is.

FAQ #5: How do I know when my baby needs to be fed?

Several signs will tell you that your baby is hungry and needs to be fed. Here are the main signs that you should watch out for:

- Not sleeping soundly and tossing and turning
- Frequently placing hands around the mouth
- Making sucking motions with mouth while asleep or awake
- Mouth opening when you touch your baby's mouth
- Sucking on hands, fingers or lips
- Your baby turns their head toward you breast or chest (this is called “rooting”)

Pick up these hunger cues so that you can feed your baby right away. It'll also be easier for you to get a good latch when you notice hunger cues early on.

Common Myths About Breastfeeding

Since breastfeeding can be considered a controversial subject, and many mothers have shared their varied experience with breastfeeding, myths about this natural practice have popped up over time. But it's time to lay these myths to rest and set the record straight. Learn about these myths and their truths to help you understand breastfeeding better and reassure yourself that it's completely okay to breastfeed.

Myth #1: You need to prepare your breasts for breastfeeding.

Since breastfeeding is a natural part of being a mother and a woman, you don't need to do anything to prepare milk in your breasts. During pregnancy, your body is already producing and preparing the milk

you'll need to feed your baby. You don't need to worry about getting your breasts ready for breastfeeding.

Myth #2: It's normal to feel pain while you're breastfeeding.

This is probably one of the top myths to be spread around in the breastfeeding world. The truth is, if you feel pain, it means that your baby isn't latched on to your breast properly. Many times sore or cracked nipples can be improved with better latching and positioning techniques. However, it's normal to feel discomfort – not pain – when you begin to breastfeed.

Myth #3: Your breasts will sag if you breastfeed.

Sagging breasts seem to be a major fear among women and mothers, but you don't need to worry about your breasts sagging when you breastfeed. In fact, unless your breasts cover your whole stomach and they're flat as pancakes, they aren't sagging at all. They're becoming *fuller*; due to gravity, however, your breasts may seem to look like they're sagging if the nipples are pointing downwards.

During pregnancy, your breasts become bigger due to the ligaments stretching. When you nurse, your breasts enlarge because of the milk glands, a condition known as engorgement. But your breasts won't be like this forever. Once you've gotten off breastfeeding, your breasts will return back to its pre-pregnancy stage. However, that can change if you've lost or gained a lot of weight. Exercise can help the elasticity

in your breasts become stronger and tighter, so post-pregnancy workouts will be good for your body image and health.

Myth #4: You should never breastfeed your baby if you have a cold. Actually, if you breastfeed while you have a cold or a flu, the breast milk produced during this time will have antibodies that fight off the illness. The cold-combating antibodies will transfer to your baby and give him or her more protection against these common conditions. Your baby will end up not getting sick or at least have a mild version of a common sickness.

Myth #5: Pumping is a good way of knowing how much milk the mother has. Pumping only tells you how much you can pump. The baby who breastfeeds well can get much more milk than what you can pump. How much milk can be pumped depends on many factors, including the mother's stress level.

Now you know the myths out there as well as the truth, so don't easily fear common breastfeeding rumors. Do your research before you accept any myths or beliefs about breastfeeding.

Top 10 Breastfeeding Facts and Benefits

To continue your breastfeeding education, let's go over the top 10 breastfeeding truisms that you need to know. These 10 benefits will help you realize how great breastfeeding is for you and your newborn:

1. Breast milk is healthier than formula. Your breast milk is filled with antibodies and nutrients that your baby will need after just arriving in the world. Since your newborn is still growing and adapting to his or her surrounding environment, your breast milk will help protect your baby from infections and illnesses.

Formula doesn't have the same protection that breast milk does, so it's best to start breastfeeding first before moving to formula. Also, the first time you breastfeed, the milk is thick and loaded with antibodies. This milk is called colostrum, and it's crucial that you breastfeed right away to give your baby the necessary nutrients he or she needs.

2. Breastfeeding helps save you money over time. Having a baby is going to put some stress on your wallet, but not having to buy formula because you've opted to breastfeed instead is a great way to provide nutrition to your baby and save you money. You can use the extra money saved to buy diapers – you'll need it!

3. Breastfeeding does good for you, too, moms! Breastfeeding helps your baby stay nourished and healthy, but it helps you as well. From reducing the risk of breast cancer to making it easier for you to return to your pre-pregnancy weight, breastfeeding can aid in maintaining your health, too.

4. Breastfeeding helps you relax and sleep. When you breastfeed, a hormone known as oxytocin releases, creating a sense of calm and relaxation within the body. It's perfect for mothers who haven't been

getting enough sleep! Oxytocin not only helps relax you, but it also helps prevent hemorrhage. The blood vessels that fed your baby while he or she was still in your womb close up due to the contractions that oxytocin stimulates.

5. Breastfeeding strengthens the bond between you and your baby. Babies need love and affection to grow – not just breast milk – and breastfeeding is one of the best ways to provide that for your newborn. Enjoy the moments you cradle your little bundle of joy when you're breastfeeding and know that you're giving him or her more than nutrients.

6. Breast milk is easier on your baby's sensitive digestive tract. Breast milk has a special enzyme only found in humans that help your baby digest it easier. Formula, which is made from cow's milk, is harder for the baby to digest since it takes time to adjust to.

7. Breast milk won't ever burn your precious newborn. Getting formula-made milk to the right temperature can be challenging and increase the risk of your baby being burned. But breast milk is always at the right temperature, so you won't have to worry about hurting your baby.

8. Breastfeeding helps improve your baby's jaw development. Suckling milk from your breasts strengthens the jaw and promotes healthy, strong teeth later on. Since babies use up to 60 times more

energy to suckle at your breast compared with sucking on a bottle, the exercise will aid in your baby's jaw development.

9. Breast milk increases your child's IQ. Who knew suckling at breasts throughout the day can make you smarter? Studies have shown that children who were breastfed when they were babies have higher IQ scores compared with babies who have been on formula.

10. Breastfeeding gives you less housework to do. Making milk from formula requires more time, effort, materials, and cleaning. With a baby on your hands, you'd rather have fewer things to do around the house, and breastfeeding is your way to avoid more household chores.

As you can see, breastfeeding offers more than food for your little one. It may be intimidating at first, but, as long as you know the basics, you'll become a natural at breastfeeding in no time. Lets dive in to the next chapter and learn more about breastfeeding!

Chapter 2: Breastfeeding Complications And Solutions

One of the major concerns that mothers have about breastfeeding is the complications they may face when they enter the nursing stage. Although common breastfeeding complications do exist, it doesn't mean that you should worry about them while you're nursing. Instead of being concerned about these complications or driving yourself crazy with “what if” questions, read through this chapter and simply be aware of the possible situations you may face when you're breastfeeding. By learning more about breastfeeding and other information associated with it, you'll be better equipped for any nursing obstacle that may come up.

The Big, Bad Wolf of Breastfeeding: Low Milk Supply

Nearly every mother has wondered if she has enough breast milk to give her baby. Then, the next worry comes up and makes her think that she needs to go with bottle feeding if she's not producing enough milk. If you've wondered these common questions yourself, you're not alone in the world of nursing.

What causes mothers to be concerned about their breast milk supply? Several reasons make moms feel or think that they have an inadequate amount of breast milk, but, most of the time, they're wrong. Also, if some moms do have low milk supply, various solutions are available to help increase breast milk production, which will be discussed later in this section. Here are some of the common

reasons why moms believe they don't have enough milk for their little one:

- **“My breasts don't feel full.”** Your breasts don't have to be the size of balloons to tell you that you have enough milk or not. Although your breasts can grow bigger and firmer when more milk has been produced, softer, “smaller” breasts don't mean that you're lacking in the breast milk department. Once your body grows accustomed to the amount of milk your baby needs, that's the exact amount it'll continue to produce. Now that you're a mommy, your body will make the necessary amount of milk to keep your baby healthy. This means that you won't ever run out of milk like you do with regular milk you buy from the store. Isn't the maternal human body great?!
- **“Milk has stopped leaking from my nipples. Am I out of milk?”** Just because you don't have leaky nipples doesn't mean that you're out of breast milk. Normal nipple discharge occurs when the nipples have been stimulated in some way, so it doesn't mean that you don't have milk in your breasts if your nipples don't secrete any.
- **“My baby starts to cry after a few minutes of suckling on my nipple.”** If your baby starts to cry after trying to suck milk out of your breast, it may mean that your let down reflex is slower. Each baby is different, and some babies are patient about sucking until the milk comes out. But other babies may start to cry and get impatient. What you can do is comfort your baby by cooing and bouncing him or her gently in your arms. Then, try to get your baby to latch onto your

breast again and continue to suck. If you want to have a backup plan, pump out milk and store it in your fridge. Whenever your baby is having trouble getting milk from your breasts, it may be best to go with saved breast milk. But don't think that there's something wrong with your milk supply right away if your baby starts to cry after breastfeeding; your baby may not be hungry or need a diaper change.

- **“My baby wants me to nurse him constantly.”** Babies are growing at a nonstop rate, so when your baby is going through one of the growth stages, he or she may need more breastfeeding. These growth spurts are normal processes that your baby goes through, so don't think that it's strange or avoid feeding your baby because you think it's abnormal. It may be a growth spurt on the way, so be patient and feed your baby when necessary. Here's an example for you to relate to: If you eat 6-8 small meals a day, it may feel like you haven't stopped stuffing your face. But, at the end of the day, you've consumed enough nutrients and calories to maintain your weight. Another note about nursing frequently: Breastfeeding more often will help increase your breast milk production if you think that it's low.

After debunking the common thoughts mothers have when they believe they have low milk supply, let's go over what really causes decreased milk production:

- Not feeding frequently

- Illnesses
- Birth control pills with high levels of estrogen
- A poor latch on the breast
- Menstrual cycle returning (The estrogen levels are high and can disrupt milk production.)
- Stress
- Breast surgery
- Sore, painful nipples
- Poor diet
- Medications
- Too much activity and overexertion
- Inverted nipples
- Weight

As you can see, many of the causes can easily be fixed. In fact, some of the causes are common mistakes that mothers make such as not drinking enough water. Other examples that can be fixed include poor diet, latching and high stress.

Signs that Show You Have Low Milk Supply

Your baby communicates with you in many ways besides crying, and those signs are going to be the key to check if you have low milk supply. Here are several signs that you should look out for if you're concerned about your breast milk levels:

- **The Poop** – Your baby's poop can tell you all you need to know, including if you have deficient milk supply. In the first 2-3

months of your baby's life, the poop should be yellow, seedy and loose. You should also be changing diapers at least 4-5 times a day. After 2-3 months, your baby's diapers may only have one poop per day, every other day, or may go up to five days without having a bowel movement. These signs tell you that your baby is getting enough milk for nourishment.

- **The Pee** – For the first few months, your baby's diapers should be wet at least six-eight times a day, which indicate that you're providing your baby adequate amounts of milk.
- **The Sounds** – If you hear your baby gulping while you're breastfeeding, you have enough milk for your baby.
- **The Weight** – If your baby is gaining weight and growing at a healthy rate, you know you have plenty of milk during breastfeeding time.
- **The Reactions** – Your baby should seem content and satisfied after nursing, but if he or she is fussing and crying a lot, you may not be giving him or her enough milk. However, your baby thrashing around or crying may not be an indicator that he or she is not getting enough milk but may indicate an allergy or reaction to something you ate. In this case, you would need to contact your pediatrician for testing.

The takeaway here is to observe your baby's health frequently and pay attention to any signs, no matter how small it seems to you. That's the best way to ensure that your baby is not only getting enough milk, but also stays healthy.

Top Solutions to Increase Your Breast Milk Supply

Whether you do or don't have enough breast milk for your baby, these tips and tricks can help you increase your milk production. Don't worry, though – these solutions are simple to apply, so you can put a stop to those “What if I don't have enough milk?” thoughts running through your head.

1. Increase your breastfeeding sessions. Feed your baby often. Frequent nursing sessions stimulate your body to produce more milk. Be sure to offer both breasts at each feeding. You can also stimulate your body to produce more milk by adding a pumping session between nursings. Store any milk you pump to give your baby at future nursings, if needed, until your milk supply increases. You don't want to supplement your baby's feedings with any solid food or formula, unless you and your caregiver decide that your baby needs supplemental nourishment for medical reasons.

Also, avoid the use of a pacifier and, instead, encourage your baby to comfort themselves at the breast – the sucking will stimulate your milk production. In other words, feed on demand, not by time until you know for sure your baby is getting enough milk.

2. Practice the perfect latch on with your baby. In many cases, a poor latch is the reason for many babies' hunger cries. Not only is a good latch necessary for feeding your little one, but it's also essential for milk production. The more your breast is stimulated, the more milk you'll produce. Follow the mini guide for latching and positioning in

Chapter 1, and practice the steps frequently to help you and your baby get used to latching and obtaining the perfect latch.

3. Stop dieting and start eating healthy. We're bombarded with diet programs all the time, and these diet programs promise that you'll lose weight quickly, get bikini-ready for the summer, and every other guarantee out there. After having a baby and putting on weight, moms may have a weak spot for anything that promises drastic weight loss.

But because you're a mother – a breastfeeding one at that – you need to avoid fad diets. If you go on a diet while you're breastfeeding, you may cause your milk production to decrease. What's most important now is to provide your baby with the milk and nutrients he or she needs.

Of course, that doesn't mean that you should ignore your weight and health. Your well-being matters because your baby needs you to be healthy in order to feed him or her. It may be tempting to reach out for the nearest chip bag or box of cookies, but those types of foods won't give you vital nutrients for you or your baby.

Feed yourself with healthy, wholesome foods. You don't need to follow a certain diet program to stay healthy. We're naturally programmed to know what's good for us and what's not. For instance, you know that most packaged goods have no nutritional value and provide zero benefits to your health. But leafy greens, colorful

vegetables, and lean meat ring a bell in your mind and alerts you that these are healthy foods.

Foods to Eat When Breastfeeding

To get you on the right track for better health, gradual, sustainable weight loss, and increase breast milk production, here are several lactogenic foods that you can incorporate in your daily diet:

- **Oatmeal** – Carbs are known to help you relax and even fall asleep more soundly. But white breads, white rice, and other simple carbohydrates won't be good additions to your diet, so leave them out. Choose oatmeal for one of your main energy and milk production food sources. Since oatmeal can make you feel fuller faster and help you relax, your body will release the hormone, oxytocin, which aids in producing breast milk. Oatmeal will also help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Versatile and nutritiously fulfilling, oatmeal is a must-have food item in your diet.
- **Carrots** – Be your own Bugs Bunny by eating carrots in your diet! Whether for a side dish with your baked chicken or as a midday snack, carrots are high in beta-carotene, a component that gives carrots its famous bright orange color and helps with lactation. Vitamin A is another essential nutrient that promotes breast milk production, too, and carrots are full of this fantastic vitamin. You can whip up honey-glazed carrots, steamed carrots with garlic butter or use sliced carrots in breakfast smoothies to get your daily dose of carrots.

- **Salmon** – This distinguished orange-y pink fish has made it to the top of many health food lists, but most people don't know that salmon is also a fantastic food for lactation. Salmon contains EFAs, also known as essential fatty acids, and they are one of the components of breast milk. Also, the EFAs found in salmon help produce necessary hormones to boost milk production. Bake, grill or steam salmon with citrus and herbs for a refreshingly light entree, or cook it and shred it in a spring mix salad for a wholesome meal.
- **Dried apricots** – This yummy, naturally sweet dried fruit is a great food to snack your way to more breast milk. Dried apricots contain tryptophan, an amino acid that increases prolactin. (Prolactin is a hormone that stimulates milk production.) Dried apricots also have phytoestrogens, an element that aids in balancing out hormones that are vital to milk production. Calcium and vitamin A are also nutrients of dried apricots, and they also help your produce more milk. Chop up dried apricots and toss them in a salad. Another way to eat dried apricots is in homemade trail mix.
- **Spinach** – As one of the notable leafy greens in the produce aisle, spinach has a wide array of nutrients that help increase your breast milk supply. One of these nutrients is known as folate, and it's a B vitamin that gives your breast milk supply a big boost. Vitamins A and K, calcium, and iron are also main nutrients spinach offers that will bring more milk to your breasts. From salads to side dishes, spinach is a versatile vegetable, so add spinach leaves in as many meals as you can. But make

sure that you make room in your grocery budget for organic spinach. Spinach is one of the Dirty Dozens – produce that have the highest levels of pesticides and other harmful chemicals – so it's best that you get organic spinach.

- **Chickpeas** – Also known as garbanzo beans, chickpeas are known for being the base ingredient for hummus. But, today, you'll go out into the world knowing that it's more than a main component of a delicious spread. Chickpeas have been a popular galactagogue since ancient Egyptian times – and those ancient Egyptians knew what they were doing! You can use chickpeas in soups, homemade hummus, salads, and even as a snack if they're seasoned with spices and dried.
- **Oranges** – Full of vitamin C, oranges can be your go-to snack each day while you're breastfeeding. Mothers who are breastfeeding need more vitamin C in their diet, so get your vitamin C from sweet, tangy, and juicy oranges. The vitamin C found in oranges will help make more milk because you'll get an essential vitamin in your body that'll keep you healthy, which is a critical factor for breastfeeding.
- **Water** – This may sound like a no-brainer, but water needs to be emphasized on this list. Even though it's not a food, water still needs to be mentioned. Since you're breastfeeding frequently, your energy and hydration levels will go down more quickly. Drink water often throughout the day, and keep a bottle of water with you if you leave the house. Also, don't buy bottled water anymore. Not only will you save money, but you'll also have more control of your water source if you know where it's

coming from. Instead, purchase a water filter for your sink or a water pitcher with a filter. You'll get bang for your buck by investing in a water purifier.

Foods to Avoid When Breastfeeding

Now that you know what foods you should eat to help increase your breast milk supply, here's a list of the foods you should avoid completely or limit when you're breastfeeding:

- **Alcohol** – It is best to avoid alcohol. If you breastfeed alcohol gets into your system and can harm your baby and your milk production.
- **Caffeinated drinks** – Coffee drinks, sodas, caffeinated teas, and other caffeinated beverages aren't ideal for you to have while breastfeeding. The caffeine will become part of your breast milk and transfer to your baby, making it hard for him or her to sleep.
- **Allergy-prone foods** – Shellfish, fish, wheat, milk, soy, eggs, tree nuts and peanuts are examples of foods your baby may develop an allergy for if you eat them. If you have a family history of food allergies, avoid the foods that cause those allergies.

You don't have to go on a diet specifically to grow your milk supply. Remember, a happy, healthy mother is a happy, healthy baby! Create your own healthy eating plan with lactogenic foods in mind, or talk to a doctor or dietitian for a customized eating plan for you.

If you plan to make your own diet, be sure to add 500 more calories per day. You can divide the extra 500 calories among your meals so you don't have to eat an extra plate of food to reach that calorie amount. Nursing moms need to increase their calorie intake to keep their energy levels up, so don't worry about gaining weight. Eat nutritious foods, and you won't have anything to fret over.

Another tip for your eating plan is to eat six small meals and snacks a day. Compared with the typical three meals a day menu, the six small meals and snacks a day will ensure that your stress levels are low. Not only will you be able to keep stress levels under control, but you'll also increase your metabolism, burn more fat, and avoid binge eating.

When you create your own healthy diet plan, you don't have to restrict yourself from your favorite foods. If you love to indulge in a scrumptious chocolate bar, go for it, maybe just not everyday. If you consider fried chicken your comfort food, have it for dinner one night out of the week and limit the amount of fried chicken you eat. You don't have to give up everything; you just need to eat any junk food and comfort food in moderation. Don't torture yourself if you find going on an all-healthy food diet too difficult at first. Don't jump into the impossible yet if you don't think you can take on the impossible and make it possible. Slow and steady wins the race after all! As a treat for you, here's a simple recipe for lactation oatmeal cookies. Lactation cookies are a great, healthy snacks that help you

produce more milk, maintain your health, and allows you to indulge your sweet tooth all at the same time. Enjoy! You deserve it.

Milk-Making Oatmeal and Chocolate Lactation Cookies for Moms

<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 ¼ TBSPs of water• 1 TBSP of flaxseed meal• ½ cup of butter• ½ cup of white sugar• ½ cup of light brown sugar, packed• 1 egg• ½ tsp of vanilla• 1 cup of all-purpose flour• 1-2 TBSPs of brewer's yeast• ½ tsp of baking soda• ½ tsp of salt• 1 1/3 cups of quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats• ½ cup of chocolate chips• ½ cup of raisins	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper or grease the baking sheet.2. Mix the water and flaxseed meal together in a bowl. Set aside and let the mixture sit for 3-5 minutes.3. Beat the butter and sugars in another bowl until fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, and beat each into the sugar mixture. Add the flaxseed meal mixture in and beat it in. Add the vanilla next and beat it in.4. Sift the flour, yeast, baking soda, and salt into the wet ingredients, and mix with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula until smooth.

5. Stir in the oats and chocolate chips until a dough forms. Scoop 1-2 TBSPs of dough onto the baking sheet. Bake for 12 minutes or until done. Take out the baking sheet, and let cookies cool on the sheet for 2-3 minutes. Then, gently transfer them to a cooling rack. Eat them when they're warm and easy to handle or when they're completely cool.

Baking Tip: You can add more brewer's yeast and oats to increase your milk production.

4. Use lactation supplements. Lactation supplements are packed with beneficial ingredients for moms who want to have a full supply of breast milk for their babies. Take [Mother's Select Nursing & Lactation Plus supplement](#) for example. This lactation supplement is made with a blend of nutritious, milk-producing agents, such as fennel, fenugreek, blessed thistle, and marshmallow root, and free of harmful chemicals and allergens; you won't have to worry about risking your health and your baby's health when you take Mother's Select Nursing &

Lactation Plus supplement. The benefits of taking this supplement to help make more milk include:

- Boosts your milk production so you won't run out of milk;
- Enhances breast milk ejection;
- Improves your baby's digestion and promotes baby's growth of internal digestion system;
- Provides a unique blend of superior ingredients to increase milk supply;
- Helps maintain your breast health;
- Save money on formula and nursing equipment and accessories in the long run.

Not only does Mother's Select keep your baby in mind, but your own health as well. This particular lactation supplement will give you the boost you need to create more milk. If you'd like to get your hands on this premium lactation supplement, order at [Mother's Select online website](#).

A premium lactation supplement should be on top of the list for every mother to jumpstart her breast milk production, and keep her production healthy throughout her breastfeeding journey. Take [Mother's Select Nursing & Lactation Plus](#) after birth and throughout breastfeeding to ensure this.

Remember, lactation supplements should not be taken while pregnant. Take lactation supplements only after giving birth when your milk is being produced!

5. Increase the amount of feedings per day. Your body is designed as a supply-and-demand system. The more you breastfeed your baby, the more milk will be produced and stored for the next feeding. You should nurse every two hours at the least, even at night or when your baby is sleeping. It might seem tedious and disruptive to your baby's sleeping cycle, but it won't do any harm. If you're too tired during the evenings to breastfeed, use a breast pump to extract milk from your breast and store it. Your partner can take care of the feedings during the nights so you can get some rest. However, for the first several weeks after you've given birth, you should nurse your baby from the breast rather than a bottle, when at all possible.

If you want to continue nursing your baby yourself at night, take naps with your baby during the day. With a baby as part of your family now, expect your sleeping pattern to change a lot! By adding more breastfeeding sessions in your day, though, you won't have to worry about if you have low breast milk supply.

While you're increasing the number of times you breastfeed, extend the time you spend nursing as well. For instance, let your baby suck on your right breast for 15 minutes, then switch to the left breast for 15 minutes. By spending more time breastfeeding, you'll also stimulate more milk production.

To summarize this tip, follow these two steps:

1. Breastfeed every two hours or more often.

2. Nurse for a longer period of time.

Remember to experiment with times to see which best fits you and your baby's needs.

6. Explore alternative ways to boost your milk supply. Although you might be skeptical at first, different methods are available for you to enhance your breast milk supply. Several methods that can assist you in breast milk production are from the East. Learn more about them in the following:

Yoga

“Ommm” your way to more breast milk with yoga! Yoga is based on the practice of breathing, meditating, and moving energy throughout your body in order to reach inner peace and relaxation. Yoga is a great way for moms to get more milk pumping out because it helps relieve stress and anxiety, which interfere with breast milk creation in the body; the hormones that help produce milk will have an easier time doing so when you're relaxed. Another excellent benefit of yoga is improved circulation, and this will increase letdowns and milk production. Join classes or invest in yoga exercise DVD's so you can get your yogi on and get more milk flowing.

Acupuncture

When the word “acupuncture” comes up, you're probably imagining a hundred needles sticking out of your body and you being frightened

enough to faint. But even the most needle-fearing patient can enjoy an acupuncture session and reap the benefits. This ancient Eastern practice has been used for many purposes, from pain relief and, believe it or not, breast milk production. If you're up for the challenge, going to an acupuncturist can aid in producing more breast milk for your little one. The special needles used during an acupuncture session for increased breast milk triggers milk-making hormones and increases the amount of milk your body creates. Find acupuncturists in or around your area, and discuss the issues you have with breastfeeding to see how they can help you.

Chiropractor

Chiropractors do more than cracking bones. Going to a chiropractor to aid in milk production is a great idea; you'll also benefit in many other ways, such as feeling more relaxed, having better posture, and perform better in daily activities. Chiropractors assist you by aligning the vertebrae of your spine and neck to improve communication between your brain and nerves. A specific nerve known as the fourth intercostal nerve connects directly to your nipple, and, after visiting a chiropractor a few times, you may experience better, increased milk production. Search for chiropractors in your area, and see if they can help you with low breast milk supply. Ask them about the procedure and check if it's right for you.

Although these methods may seem unconventional, remember that these practices are meant to help you. You'll also heal your entire body and benefit from one of these approaches; it's not just for

restoring your breast milk supply. Consider one of these methods, and speak to specialists for more information.

Keep in mind that your baby will communicate with you always when it comes to breastfeeding. If he or she is hungry, crying will ensue. If he or she wants more milk, he or she will keep suckling at your breast. If your baby has had enough milk at the time, he or she will let go of your breast. Listen and watch your baby so you understand the signals he or she is giving you. Don't force your baby to breastfeed, and don't be too relaxed about it. Every mother and baby pair is different. If you read one mom's experience about breastfeeding, it doesn't mean that you'll go through the same situation as she did. Focus on your baby and not other people's experiences or personal advice; you'll learn much more that way and be better at breastfeeding.

Other Breastfeeding Complications and Solutions

Besides low milk supply, there are other breastfeeding complications that may arise, so it's crucial for you to know the variety of breastfeeding problems as well as the solutions to them. In this section, you'll be introduced to common issues that mothers have when breastfeeding. This doesn't mean that it'll happen to you, though, so don't feel discouraged or concerned. Simply read through this section and get familiar with the information provided.

Engorgement

Engorgement can occur after you've given birth, usually within 2-5 days. Your body is going through rapid changes to adapt to the

lifestyle you'll be leading as a breastfeeding mommy. Because of that, your breasts may become a little too full due to the increased blood and milk flows. Engorgement symptoms include tenderness, pain, discomfort, swelling, and firmness of the breasts. Engorgement can make it hard for your baby to latch on to your breast and make it harder for you to breastfeed. Understand that fullness of the breasts is different from engorgement. Your breasts will look and feel full for the first 2-3 weeks after you've given birth to your baby, but if your breasts are painful, firm or any of the other symptoms, it's most likely engorgement.

Several options to prevent and cure engorgement include:

- Place warm washcloths on your breasts for 2-4 minutes. The warmth from the cloth will stimulate milk flow. You can also take a quick, hot shower, but don't stay in the water for a long time because the heat can make you boobs swell even more. To reduce swelling, apply cold washcloths or compresses on your breasts for 2-4 minutes.
- Breastfeed regularly. Engorgement can be caused by not releasing more milk to your baby. Nurse every 2-3 hours to help relieve engorgement.
- While you're breastfeeding, massage the breast your baby is suckling on to encourage better milk flow.

If symptoms don't subside after a couple of days or you start to get sick, contact your physician immediately.

Thrush

While your baby's digestive system is developing, there may be an overgrowth of natural yeast producing in your baby's stomach and form cottage-cheese-like formations in his or her mouth or a red, raised diaper rash. This common condition is known as thrush, and it's completely harmless. Thrush is caused by an overgrowth of yeast, but it can also be caused by your breast milk. If you're taking antibiotics, they can be found in your milk and become a catalyst for thrush.

To treat thrush, you'll need to call your doctor and get diagnosed. Then, you'll get prescribed anti-fungal medication for both you and your baby to help relieve thrush. Sometimes, thrush can go away within a couple of weeks, and you just need to keep your breasts dry since yeast thrives on warm, moist areas. But if your baby is uncomfortable or in pain, go see your pediatrician immediately.

Sore Nipples

Many new moms suffer from sore nipples and believe that it's just a part of breastfeeding. But the truth is that sore nipples are actually an abnormal symptom and a big red flag if you have them after weeks of breastfeeding. After you've just given birth, your body is going through all sorts of changes, so it's normal to have sensitive nipples for a few days. More than that, though, means you may be doing something wrong.

If you have sore nipples, it may mean that your baby isn't latching on properly. Practice the steps in the mini guide provided in Chapter 1 on latching and positioning to get a better latch.

Other reasons for sore nipples include:

- Your baby has a thrush infection.
- Your baby may be tongue-tied, which is a condition where the tissue between the tongue and bottom of the mouth is too short.
- You have nipple blisters.
- You have a milk bleb, a layer of skin that blocks milk from coming out and clogs the milk duct.

Check with your healthcare provider and see if you have any condition that may be causing your nipples to be sore besides poor latching, which can be corrected.

Having Inverted Nipples

Inverted nipples are one that retract toward your breast rather than out. Even if your nipples don't protrude, it doesn't mean that you can't breastfeed. It may take practice, but remember that your baby doesn't suck at the nipple – he or she sucks from the areola. (Refer to the mini guide on latching and positioning in [Chapter 1!](#))

The solution for breastfeeding with inverted nipples is to get the milk flowing before hand with a breast pump. If you still need help with

breastfeeding, talk to a lactation consultant for more specialized tips and information.

Mastitis

This common bacterial infection found in your breast tissue, and signs and symptoms for mastitis include fevers, chills, swelling, soreness, and redness. Mastitis can be caused by blocked milk ducts, engorgement, cracked and dry nipples, and even high stress and fatigue.

Here are several ways for you to treat mastitis:

*Important note: **Don't stop nursing.** Use a breast pump or breastfeed to pump out the milk from the infected breast. This method will help alleviate the soreness and pain you feel in your affected breast. Your breast milk will be safe for your baby to ingest since the fluids found in his or her digestive system will destroy the bacteria in your milk.*

- Use cold and warm compresses or washcloths and alternate between them to soothe your sore boobs. Do this for 15 minutes with each compress before you breastfeed to help improve milk flow and relieve soreness.
- Massage the affected breast gently to ease the soreness and increase circulation. You can do this while you soak your breasts in a basin of warm water or in a warm bath. The warm temperature will help unblock milk ducts and increase milk flow.

- You may need to go to the doctor if the symptoms worsen, and you may be prescribed antibiotics. Make sure you pump out breast milk ahead of time to reduce the chances of your baby getting thrush; however, thrush development may not be a condition you can avoid, especially if you use antibiotics for several days. Talk to your physician about the risk of thrush development as well.

You've learned the basics of breastfeeding issues that can happen, from low milk supply to thrush, as well as the various solutions for them. Although much information was thrown your way, you can always refer back to this chapter when you're trying to figure out what a breastfeeding issue may be. It's best to call your physician if you're concerned with any breastfeeding problems you think you have, so *always* double check with your doctor.

In the next chapter, you'll be the center of attention, so get ready for easy and fun tips for improving and taking care of you!

Chapter 3: You Come First

There seems to be an epidemic among new – even experienced – moms, and it's caused mothers to feel way more guilty than they need to be, lower their self-esteem drastically, and potentially go crazy. Moms and women in general are being pressured to do it all and have it all, from a successful career to a well-balanced home life. Mothers are also being pressured to be the perfect mom for their children. But what are the missing ingredients in all these aspirations that society and even friends and family members have set for moms? These ingredients are their own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.

Maybe some moms don't want to have a full-blown, 6-figure career. Maybe some moms don't want to strive to be perfect ones. Maybe some moms just want to be happy and live a simple life. No matter what you want in life and what responsibilities you have, remember one thing: **You come first.** Many moms use common excuses such as they're too busy or they're taking care of their kids and don't have time for themselves, but they're only neglecting themselves. Eventually, there won't be a woman who has her own individual interests and passions in life – just someone who focuses all her attention on other aspects in her life.

Don't misunderstand – your family, friends, work, and every other part of your life are critical components of your life. But they're not as

important as you. For example, if you weren't keeping yourself healthy and got sick a lot, you wouldn't be able to be there for your kids or go to work to help support yourself and your family.

This chapter centers around transforming you into a happier, healthier, and more confident woman. Of course, you won't be ignoring the vital roles you play in your life, such as being a mother, a wife, and a friend, so don't worry about you having to abandon your responsibilities to improve yourself as an individual. As you work on yourself, you'll also affect the other areas of your life positively. If you're ready for simple and effective ways to become a better you and a better mom, let's move on to the next section of this chapter!

How to Deal with Mommy Guilt

Mommy Guilt – a true monster that creeps up constantly, gnawing at your conscience and making you feel bad about yourself all the time. Every mommy has been through the Mommy Guilt Trip at least a handful of times. Mommy Guilt is a nasty trick played by your mind to make you feel like you're inadequate or not a good enough mother. The question now is: Will you allow guilt to rule over your whole motherhood and yourself?

When it comes to dealing with things in your life that create negative emotions and thoughts, change is the best way to handle these situations. If something is causing you stress or pain, do you still want to do it? Think about the comfort zones you have in life, such as not wanting to try new foods or wearing baggy clothes because you're

not confident about your body. Albeit comfort zones aren't always a good thing, you still want to stay in them because you're comfortable; you don't like to feel uncomfortable. That's why the Mommy Guilt you suffer from should be nipped in the bud once and for all.

Tons of moms have trouble getting rid of their Mommy Guilt because they believe that they have to feel that way. They think that guilt means that they're being a good mom and realizing their mistakes, even if they're not doing anything wrong.

To help you through the Mommy Guilts, here are several common scenarios that kindle the Mommy Guilt flame and how to deal with the guilt when it comes up:

Guilt Trip #1: Yelling At Your Kids

Whether from anger or stress, yelling at your kids isn't the ideal way to discipline them or release any built-up emotions. Even though you know that already, automatically reacting to a situation in a negative way and yelling at your children as a result can invite Mommy Guilt.

The best way to let go of the guilt is to, well, let it go! You yelled, and that's now in the past. It can't ever be changed, so what you can do is take a few deep breaths, lower your voice, and tell your kids what they did wrong calmly. Then, help them come up with a solution and get them to fix the problem if possible. This not only helps your

children become more independent, but you'll also have better communication between you and your kids.

If you have a baby and he or she makes a mistake like tossing food on the ground, don't slam things down on the table, spank your baby or yell. Take a breather, and clean up the mess. Your baby doesn't know any better yet, so just breathe and forgive. However, if you think that your baby is expressing abnormal behavior, you may want to consult your physician or other specialist.

If you have frequent yelling outbursts, it's a good idea to work on your anger or stress. Here are a handful of techniques you can use for being a calmer, more patient person:

- Count to five slowly in your head or out loud, and take a few deep breaths while you're at it.
- Stop expecting your kids to be perfect little angels. Lowering your expectations doesn't mean that you wish less for them. It'll just help you realize that they're human, too, and they've got much more to learn about life. You already have the knowledge, so now it's time to pass on the basic lessons you've learned to them.
- Find other ways to release your stress and tension. Yelling is a form of emotional release for people, but it's not the best way to do that. Also, it'll only scare your kids in the end and make them resent you. Take care of yourself and improve your temper by

finding other ways to let go of bottled up emotions, such as exercising.

- Prepare a go-to affirmation to repeat to yourself when you're about to lose it. For instance, "I am calm" is an example of a great, effective affirmation that you can use to give yourself time to choose how you want to react to a situation. Affirmations are also beneficial to you since your mind will do what you tell it to. So, if you want to be calm, say "I am calm" until it sinks in and you start feeling it.
- Walk away from the situation. Make sure you put your kids in a safe place first and there aren't any harmful objects around before you walk away. Do it quickly before you blow a fuse, though; if your kids ask you questions, ignore them or tell them you'll answer later if you can keep your tone even.

Side note about yelling: Don't make it a go-to resource for discipline. Even if your parents and great-grandparents did it, it doesn't mean you have to do it, too. Yelling isn't going to make your kids listen to you, so please reconsider this disciplinary tactic and how it affects your kids negatively before doing it again.

Guilt Trip #2: Working

It's completely normal to have a dream career and goals to get to it, but many mothers feel like they have to give up on that dream and take care of their kids 24/7. A belief in the Mom World is that, if you don't spend more time with your kids, you'll 'mess them up' somehow.

No mother ever wants to be the cause of any behavioral, mental or emotional problems their kids may have when they grow up.

But that belief couldn't be farther from the truth! News flash: You don't have to be around your little ones all the time, and they're going to be okay. In fact, showing your kids that you have your own aspirations and are independent enough to go after them can be very beneficial for them. They do say monkey see, monkey do!

So, how do you manage the Mommy Guilt when you go back to work? Check out these tips on how to do just that:

- Create a balance between your home and work life. Although work-life balance may seem like a myth to most people, it's definitely there if you're willing to make it happen. (You'll learn more about how to create balance in your life later in this chapter!)
- Connect with other moms at your workplace, or check out online communities to get support from other mommies who know what you're going through. The support will help you feel comforted and know that you're not alone. You'll also receive valuable, personal advice from mothers who've "been there, done that."
- Call or Skype your kids from your smart phone or check on them personally during your lunch break. You'll feel reassured when you see their adorable faces or hear their silly talks over

the phone. This will also help you connect with your children more and establish more lines of communication between you and them.

- Work from home. Yes, it's possible to work from home, build your career, and bring home the bacon. If you're a corporate worker, you can talk to your boss about telecommuting and see if you can work from home most of the time. You can also build your own sustainable online business and work from home. Can you say no more expensive daycare or babysitter costs?

The main point here is to not feel guilty about going to work. If a career is truly what you want, then go with it. It's for you! It's not for your kids, your spouse, your friends or anyone else. You deserve to achieve your dreams; just don't neglect the other parts of your life.

Guilt Trip #3: Breastfeeding

Although this e-book is focused on pro-breastfeeding, plenty of moms are still iffy about this common practice and opt for formula and bottle feeding. They also feel guilty about it and think that they're not giving their babies the best when they do so. Listen up, moms – *you don't have to feel guilty about giving your baby formula and feeding from a bottle.* In Chapter 1, you learned how breastfeeding benefits both you and your baby, but using an alternative food source for your baby is totally okay.

The harsh truth is that you may be judged by other women and mothers who may be anti-formula, but don't let that get you down. Breastfeeding can cause infections, too, and you need another way to feed your baby. Some women can't breastfeed due to other conditions they may have, so formula is the only option. It doesn't make you a bad mother, and it doesn't make your baby's health worse.

Choose a formula that provides healthy nutrients that your baby needs to grow. If someone doesn't approve of your choice, who cares? It's your body, and it's you who makes the decisions for you and your baby. Say goodbye to your guilt, and tell others to mind their own business. Or you can say, "Thank you for the advice and your opinion" if you don't want to be too assertive!

If you decide to not breastfeed, talk to your doctor about the best formula for your baby and when you can start giving your baby formula. You can also opt for breast pumping to give your baby healthy mama's milk instead of formula. (See? You can still give your baby the benefits of breastfeeding without the actual breastfeeding.) It's highly recommended, though, that you start breastfeeding right away when your baby is born since the milk that comes out first is full of nutrients and antibodies you can't get from formula milk.

If you need a boost in confidence about the whole breastfeeding vs. bottle-feeding controversy, [read this inspiring story](#) about a mom who had to deal with this conflict and found her answer.

More Tips for Dealing with Mommy Guilt

In some cases, Mommy Guilt seems to come up randomly throughout the day, even when you're dealing with something insignificant. Read the following tips to learn how to deal with Mommy Guilt at any time:

1. Communicate with your spouse. It's common for partners to be so occupied with a newborn or raising kids that they forget to take care of their relationship. Make time for your relationship and talk about any concerns or thoughts you have about caring for the kids. Also, add in some small talk into the mix and connect with your spouse. You both are still unique individuals who have emotional needs, so don't neglect him and make an effort to reconnect with your partner throughout the day. Also, keep the spark alive in your relationship by showing affection toward each other. Touch, kiss, hug, and any other flirty and loving physical expression your partner. Touching is a great way to stay close to your partner without words, so do it often. You don't have to have sex to make that physical connection!

2. Realize that your children have their own feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. Your kids' behaviors are based on their own feelings, thoughts, and beliefs, so don't blame yourself for everything they do.

Even if they're young and you've given them lectures to last a lifetime, your children can still do ridiculous things. Even at a young age, your kids choose how they want to act and what they want to do.

The best way to teach and raise your kids is to be a great role model for them. Since you're the closest person to your children, they'll look up to you and copy you, whether what you do is right or wrong. When they enter adulthood, they may be exact copies of you in several ways. For example, if you use a lot of credit cards and stress out a lot about debt, your kids may develop that habit as well. This is known as programming, and it's deep-rooted in the subconscious mind. It continues to play the thoughts and beliefs it believes is true, and that's why you want to watch what you do and say around your kids.

3. Stop comparing. Stop comparing yourself to other moms and women. Stop comparing your children to others. With every person you meet, you only see the exterior traits of that individual. For instance, if you have a friend who has a great career and a family, you may think that she has it all; however, you don't know what goes on behind closed doors. You don't know if she's having a terrible time balancing her life and work and her marriage is on the line. If a child has top grades in your kid's class, you don't know if he or she studies all the time instead of playing with the neighborhood kids.

The bottom line is you don't know what people are going through or what they did to get to a certain point, so don't compare yourself from

observations you've made about people. Just because you won't be able to enroll your daughter in dance class doesn't mean you're a bad mom. There are other ways for your children to enjoy what they want to do in life besides taking formal classes.

4. Be good enough, not perfect. Perfectionism and motherhood don't go hand in hand; in fact, perfectionism doesn't exist at all, no matter how much you think someone or something is perfect. You may think that being perfect will make you happy, but think about perfectionism logically: When you aim to be perfect, you stress out more, you're never satisfied with the results, and you end up wasting time. How can going for perfection ever achieve happiness? Instead of perfect, go for good enough. Perfectionism vs. good enough can be related to how much you eat during meals: Eat until you're full, not until you're stuffed.

5. Don't let others make you feel guilty or tell you what to do as a mom. To be the best mom is to be the mom you feel is right for you and your children. Many moms may try to tell you what to do and even enter in your personal space and *show* you what to do. Don't allow them to push your buttons. You're the only one who knows what's best for you and your child (and your doctor, but that's on a more professional level, so to speak). Take advice with a grain of salt, and don't let people guilt trip you.

Although Mommy Guilt will continue to come up when you're faced with new obstacles as a mom, don't let it faze you. The guilt you feel only traps you, prevents you from thinking clearly, and handling a situation properly. Accept the guilt, let it go, and move on. No benefit comes from living in the guilt, so remove yourself from it.

Mommy Health 101

You've heard it all before: A well-balanced diet and regular exercise is the best way to keep yourself healthy and maintain the ideal weight for your body. But for moms, eating well and staying fit aren't enough. During pregnancy and after giving birth, your body changes in numerous directions. Even if you were a former fitness champion before pregnancy, it's easy to slip into bad eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle.

Neglecting yourself isn't beneficial for you or your family. It's critical that you focus on doing things for your health and fitness and gain back control over your body. You'll discover tips and tricks to do just that in this section, so let's get started!

Your Mommy Diet

“Diet” has a negative connotation in society, but many people don't know the real definition of it. A diet isn't a fad diet like the Cabbage Soup Diet or the Military Diet. A diet is what you eat on a daily basis. Create a food journal, and log the food you eat daily – there's your diet! Unfortunately, the true meaning of the word “diet” gets misconstrued, but we're clearing it up now. For your Mommy Diet,

you don't need to do anything fancy. You'll find real and reasonable tips in this section that will help you lose or maintain your weight from diet alone. Your diet makes up 70 percent of your health, so that's why it deserves your focus more than exercising; you need nutritious foods anyway to give you energy so you can keep moving. Here are several tips you can apply to your life and help create your own Mommy Diet eating plan:

1. Develop a healthy relationship with food. Treating food as an enemy isn't going to get you anywhere when it comes to being a healthy mom. You're a role model to your kids now, and showing them how to have a healthy relationship with food is essential. If you binge, starve, go on fad diets, etc., your children are more likely to copy you when they grow up. They're thinking, "If Mommy does it, I can do it, too." You should also be careful about what you say about weight around your kids; it can affect their thinking later on in life.

However, this isn't just for your children. You also deserve to have a healthy relationship with food. Don't look at unhealthy foods with disdain or limit your food intake so much that you're practically starving! If you have a cupcake one day out of the week, it doesn't mean that you'll gain unwanted pounds instantly. Let go of the silly beliefs that you have about weight and body image – they're only limiting you and preventing you from enjoying your life.

2. Eat everything in moderation. It's just *one* cookie! It won't hurt you as long as it's just one and not fifty. Moderation is the key for a

successful diet. You can indulge in your favorite comfort foods and still maintain a healthy weight. Going cold turkey from foods you've eaten for years can backfire and cause you to binge later on. If you want to eat a burger, eat a fourth or a half of it and save the rest for another meal. If you want cake, get a small slice instead of a large one. Every food item can be eaten in moderation. It's best, though, to eat more healthy foods in your meals so you can maintain your overall well-being. But don't be so strict with diet guidelines – you'll make yourself miserable that way.

3. Prepare healthy snacks. When you're busy running errands and trying to have a balanced lifestyle, you'll get bouts of hunger pangs here and there throughout the day. That's why it's vital to have healthy snacks on hand so you don't go hungry and feel tempted to get convenient yet unhealthy foods to curb the hunger. Keep a variety of healthy snacks on hand, and grab some and put it in your purse or diaper bag if you're going out of the house for a while. You can also whip up healthy snacks for your kids, too, while you're at it.

Make it easier on yourself and save time by picking one day out of the week to prepare snacks. For example, you can dedicate Sunday as your snack-prep day and set a time to get all your snacks ready for the week ahead. With healthy snacks on hand, you'll keep your energy up and continue to feed your body with nutrients it needs to function properly.

To help you get started, check out these healthy snack recipes and ideas:

<u>Baked Garlic and Herb Pita Chips</u>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 6-inch pita breads or whole wheat tortillas• 4 TBSPs olive oil or other healthy oil• 2 tsp of Italian seasoning• 1 tsp of garlic powder• ½ tsp of coarse sea salt <p>Serving Size: 8 chips per serving</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper, foil or cooking spray.2. Cut the pita breads or tortillas into 8-10 slices, and place the slices on the prepared baking sheet, inside side up.3. Mix the Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and sea salt together in a small bowl.4. Brush the olive oil on the pita slices, and sprinkle the Italian seasoning mixture on top.5. Bake the pita slices for 6-10 minutes until golden brown and crispy. Make sure to flip them halfway through the baking time. <p>After baking, let them cool completely before you put them into separate snack bags. Serve with your favorite herb</p>

spread or hummus.

Baked Mozzarella Sticks

Ingredients:

- 6 sticks of mozzarella string cheese
- 1 egg
- 2 TBSPs of flour
- 2 TBSPs each of Italian-seasoned bread crumbs and Panko bread crumbs
- 1 tsp of grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ TBSP of dried parsley
- Healthy marinara sauce for dipping

Serving Size: 2 cheese sticks per person

Directions:

1. Slice the string cheese in half, and set them on a plate, wrapped in plastic. You can also put them in a bag. Freeze them for 30 minutes to make them firmer and easier to handle.

2. Ten to 15 minutes before you take the cheese halves out of the freezer, prepare the coating: Crack the egg into a small dish, and whisk. Put the flour in another bowl. Put the Italian-seasoned and Panko bread crumbs into separate bowls as well.

3. Prepare a baking sheet with foil or cooking spray.

4. Take the cheese halves out of the freezer. Coat them, one by one, in flour and shake off excess. Then, dip the cheese half in the whisked egg. After that, coat the cheese stick in the breadcrumbs and place it on the baking sheet. Repeat steps until all cheese sticks have been coated. Freeze them for another 15-30 minutes until hard.

This prevents the cheese stick halves from falling apart in the oven.

5. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit 10-15 minutes before you take out the cheese sticks. Bake them for 3-5 minutes on one side, and flip over to bake on the other side for 3-5 minutes. Make sure to check the cheese sticks occasionally to see if they're melting and oozing everywhere.

6. Let the mozzarella sticks cool for a few minutes when you take them out of the oven. Serve with marinara sauce or any other sauce you prefer.

You can always prepare the mozzarella sticks ahead of time, put them in a freezer bag, and bake them whenever you feel like munching on this delicious, cheesy snack. Most kids love this recipe, too, so try it out with your own children!

Healthy and Decadent Chocolate Banana Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of mashed bananas
- 1 cup of light brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup of butter, at room temperature
- ½ cup of granulated sugar
- 2 tsp of pure vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 2 ½ cups of all-purpose flour
- 3-4 cups of old-fashioned oats
- 2 tsp of baking soda
- 1 tsp of salt
- 1 cup of semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips
- ¼ cup of sliced almonds or more – optional
- ½ cup of coconut flakes – optional

Directions:

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and prepare a baking sheet.
2. Beat the butter and sugars together in a large bowl until fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, and beat them into the butter mixture. Beat in the vanilla extract.
3. Combine flour, oats, baking soda, and salt in a separate bowl, and add to the butter mixture. Mix until well-blended. Fold in the chocolate chips and other extra ingredients.
4. Form dough into balls by 1 TBSP each and place on baking sheet. You can save the rest of the dough in the fridge and bake cookies throughout the week.
5. Bake cookies for 18-20 minutes. Take them out, and let them cool on the sheet for 2-4 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Let them cool completely

before putting them in snack bags.

Other healthy snacks to consider for healthy eating include:

- Kale chips with olive oil and sea salt
- Homemade granola
- Soy or rice crisps
- Smoothies
- Greek yogurt with fruit slices and granola
- Edamame with sea salt
- Spiced almonds or other nuts
- Popcorn without butter or a limited amount of butter
- Dried fruit
- Homemade trail mix with nuts and dried fruits
- Banana wrapped in whole wheat pita with peanut butter or almond butter

4. Stop holding out and waiting until after your kids are in bed to eat. Nothing slows down your metabolism more than not eating. It may sound like a paradox because many diet programs tell you to reduce your calorie intake and all that mumbo-jumbo, but it's not healthy for you. Don't skip any of your meals during the day.

For a simple meal plan, go with three wholesome meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Then, in between breakfast and lunch as well as lunch and dinner, eat a healthy, fulfilling snack so you avoid binging later. Another alternative eating plan is to eat six small meals throughout the day, which is like eating appetizers several times a day. Since you'll be swamped with motherly duties and other responsibilities, eating smaller meals may be a better option for you since you can eat more quickly.

Get your metabolism and energy going 30 minutes after you wake up. Breakfast is truly the most important meal of the day because it's what will drive your body into motion and get your energy levels up. If you think you're not a breakfast person, it's most likely because you haven't developed that habit yet. Even if it's a small fruit bowl or a Greek yogurt cup, get into the habit of eating breakfast; it's also advised that you increase your food intake for breakfast, too, and make it the biggest meal of your day. Talk to a dietitian if you're not sure about which eating plan you should be following.

5. Take prenatal vitamins. Sometimes, it's not easy to get all the nutrients you need, and you'll be needing them especially if you're breastfeeding or pumping out breast milk for your baby. That's why it's suggested that you continue taking prenatal vitamins or supplements to ensure you get all you need to keep you and your baby healthy. However, don't use them to avoid eating foods that already have these essential vitamins and minerals; they're called supplements for a reason!

If you're interested in taking prenatal vitamins, try [Mother's Select Prenatal & Postnatal Multi + DHA](#), an all-in-one, nutrient-packed supplement. Made with 15 essential ingredients including DHA and omega-3, [Mother's Select Prenatal & Postnatal Multi + DHA supplement](#) helps boost your health and your baby's health, gives you more energy, and reduces stress levels. The ingredients are also natural and clinically proven to keep you and your baby in great health. Get the ultimate prenatal and postnatal supplement **here**.

To wrap up this section on Mommy health, several recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner that you can try at home have been provided below. These recipes are well-balanced, light, and fresh so you'll always have healthy meals for yourself and your family!

Breakfast Recipes

Recipe Overview:

- [Breakfast burritos](#)
- [Yogurt parfaits](#)
- [Multi-grain waffle, egg, and turkey bacon stack](#)
- [Simple smoothie recipes](#)

Breakfast Burritos

Ingredients:

- Olive oil or other healthy fat
- 8 burrito-sized whole wheat tortillas
- 8-10 eggs or egg whites
- 3-5 turkey sausages
- 2 bell peppers, any color, seeded and diced into small cubes
- 1-2 avocados, cut into thin slices
- 1.5-2 cups of diced onion of your choice (e.g., yellow, sweet, white)
- ½ cup of shredded pepperjack cheese, Mexican cheese blend or other cheese you prefer
- ½ tsp or more of red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Reduced-fat sour cream
- Salsa – homemade or store-bought
- Hot sauce – optional

** This recipe is incredibly versatile and can be vegetarian-friendly. Switch turkey sausage with canned black beans (drained and rinsed first) instead and

Directions:

1. Take the turkey sausages, cut off the casings, and roll the inside into small, round balls. If you bought pre-made turkey sausage patties, you can still form small balls with each patty.
2. Heat some oil in a skillet, and add the turkey sausage balls into the skillet. Cook on medium-high heat until they're browned and cooked thoroughly. Transfer them on a plate with a small layer of paper towels to help drain any excess grease.
3. Heat some more oil in the skillet over medium-high heat, and add the diced onions and sweet bell pepper into the skillet. Cook for 7-10 minutes until onions have softened and peppers are a bit charred on the sides. Stir and saute occasionally.
4. Add the red chili pepper flakes, and stir for 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and transfer onion and pepper mixture to a bowl or plate.
5. Crack eggs into a bowl, and whisk until combined. If you want to use egg

add it to the onion and pepper mixture. Heat the beans through, then transfer to a plate. Play around with this recipe to make your version of the breakfast burrito.

Serving Size: 1-2 burrito per person

whites only, separate the egg yolk from the whites in different bowls. Add the cheese to the eggs, and stir to mix. Add another small dose of olive oil to the skillet and heat over medium heat. Cook the eggs while scrambling them on low heat. Transfer the eggs to a plate or bowl.

6. Warm the tortillas in the microwave for about 3-7 seconds on medium or high. Place them on a cutting board or a plate. Create an assembly line of all the burrito fillings with the salsa and sour cream first. Divide all cooked ingredients into eighths since you have eight tortillas.

7. Take one tortilla and spread 1 TBSP each of sour cream and salsa on it. Layer on the onion and pepper mixture, turkey sausage, egg and cheese mixture, and a few avocado slices. Roll the tortilla into a burrito, and set aside. You can wrap it with foil to hold it together and make it easier to eat. Repeat the layering until all burritos have been made. Enjoy!

Berrytastic Greek Yogurt Parfait

Ingredients:

- Flavored or plain Greek yogurt
- Homemade granola or your favorite healthy granola product
- Fresh berries such as blueberries, sliced strawberries, and raspberries (Other fruits can be used, too)
- Honey – If you're using plain Greek yogurt, honey complements it well, so add about 2-4 TBSPs of it depending on your taste.

Yields: Depends on how much you want to make for the day. This can easily be a single serving.

Directions:

1. Line up parfait glasses, short drink glasses, plastic cups with lids or any other material that'll hold the yogurt parfait.

2. Place two tablespoons of yogurt, granola, and berries for each layer of parfait. Repeat this until you've completed the parfaits.

This recipe can be for a fun, beautiful breakfast meal or a to-go breakfast when you're pressed for time. You can store the granola in a separate snack bag and mix it in with the yogurt and berries later. This will prevent the granola from getting soft and soggy.

Multi-Grain Waffle, Egg and Turkey Bacon Stack

Ingredients:

- Olive oil or other healthy cooking fat
- 1 multi-grain waffle, frozen or homemade
- 1 eggs for sunny side up eggs or 2-3 egg whites
- 4-5 slices of turkey bacon
- Shredded cheese of your choice, preferably low-fat
- Maple syrup
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste
- Freshly chopped parsley or chives
- Hot sauce – optional

*** This recipe is for one person (you!), but you can make more waffle stacks if you would like to share it with your family.

Directions:

1. Cook the bacon over medium heat in a slightly greased skillet.
2. Cook on each side for about five minutes until browned and crispy. Use a fork, spatula or tongs to remove the bacon strips. Place them on a wire rack with a paper towel underneath it to catch the grease. This will help keep the bacon strips crisp.
3. Add a small amount of olive oil in the pan, and cook the egg sunny side up if you prefer or scramble the egg whites in the skillet.
4. While the eggs are cooking, toast the frozen waffles. If you prefer homemade, make the waffle mix while you wait for the bacon to cook and make waffles according to the waffle maker manufacturer's instructions. Make sure they're crispy and moist on the insides.
5. Place toasted waffles on a plate, and place the bacon strips on top. Drizzle over the bacon with a little maple syrup.

Then, sprinkle cheese on top. Place the egg on top of the cheese, season with herbs, salt, and black pepper, and you have your own waffle, egg, and bacon stack! Add a dash of hot sauce on top of the stack for more flavor.

** Variation: If you make your own multi-grain waffles, you can add cheese to the mix and even vegetables for a healthier breakfast.

Simple and Healthy Smoothie Recipes

Start off your day with a healthy smoothie! This makes for a great to-go breakfast beverage that's versatile and full of nutrients. If you want more convenience, you can find single-serve blenders that have blending cups that double as travel cups; you'll be able to blitz vegetables and fruits at ease and take the cup with you out the door. If the recipes below yield too much smoothie for you, you can save the rest for later.

Blueberry Smoothie

- A handful of blueberries
- 2 cups of spinach or 1 cup of kale
- ½ a large banana or 1 full medium-sized banana
- ½ – 1 cup of organic milk, soy milk, almond milk or fruit juice

PB Smoothie

- 2 TBSPs of peanut butter
- ½ – 1 cup of organic milk
- 1 whole medium-sized banana

Peaches and Oats Smoothie

- ½ – 1 cup of rolled oats, soaked overnight and drained
- 5-8 TBSPs of vanilla, peach or plain Greek yogurt
- 1 small to medium peach, sliced
- ½ of a banana

Green Banana Ginger Smoothie

- 2 cups of spinach
- 1 medium-sized banana
- 1 TBSP of honey or agave nectar
- ½ – ¾ cup of vanilla Greek yogurt
- ½ tsp of freshly grated ginger
- ½ cup of organic milk or more depending on desired consistency

Classic Banana and Strawberry Smoothie

- 1 medium-sized banana
- 8-12 strawberries, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup of freshly squeezed, homemade orange juice or milk
- 1 cup of vanilla Greek yogurt (optional)

Mango Smoothie

- 1 mango, cubed
- 1 medium-sized banana
- ½ – 1 cup of organic milk or soy milk
- ½ – 1 cup of honey, plain, vanilla or peach Greek yogurt
- ½ cup of pineapple chunks (optional)

Avocado Smoothie

- ½ – 1 medium-sized avocado
- 1 medium-sized banana
- 2 cups of spinach
- 1 mango
- ½ – 1 cup of pineapple chunks
- 1 cup of water or milk of your choice

Berry Green Smoothie

- 2-3 cups of spinach
- 1 cup each of strawberries and blueberries
- 2 medium-sized bananas
- ½ – ¾ cup of freshly squeezed orange juice
- ½ – ¾ cup of milk or water (optional)

Lunch Recipes

Recipe Overview:

- [Healthy Chicken Fried Rice](#)
- [Classic Chicken Caesar Salad Wrap](#)
- [Simple Chicken Parmesan Burger](#)

- [Easy Sweet and Sour Chicken](#)
- [Asian Chicken Salad](#)

Healthy Chicken Fried Rice

<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 cups of cooked brown rice or a mix of white and brown rice • 2 medium chicken breasts • 1 cup of frozen vegetables (can be a mix of peas, corn, and carrots) • 1 medium sweet onion, finely chopped • 2 cloves of garlic, minced • 2 -3 eggs or 3-5 egg whites • 6 tsp of sesame oil, divided • 4 TBSPs low-sodium soy sauce • ½ – 1 ½ TBSPs of oyster sauce (optional) <p>** If you want better, more authentic fried rice, use a wok to cook this dish.</p> <p>Serving Size: 4 (about 1 cup for each person)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add 2 tsp of sesame oil to the eggs, and whisk until mixed. 2. Cut chicken into bite-sized chunks, and season them with salt and pepper. (You can also use leftover cooked chicken for this recipe!) 3. Heat 2 tsp of sesame oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add uncooked chicken, and cook until done. Remove chicken chunks to a plate. 4. Heat the last 2 tsp of sesame oil in the skillet. Add frozen vegetables and onion to the skillet. Cook and stir until onions have softened, about 3-4 minutes. Add minced garlic, and stir fry for another 30-45 seconds. 5. Push the cooked vegetables to the side, and add the egg and sesame oil mixture to the skillet in the middle. Scramble the eggs until cooked. 6. Add the chicken, rice, and soy sauce

to the egg and vegetables, and toss all ingredients to combine. Use two wooden spoons to do this part.

Classic Chicken Caesar Salad Wrap

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups of romaine lettuce salad mix or spring mix
- 1 cup of cubed cooked chicken or shredded (A roast chicken is the best choice for this recipe.)
- 2 slices of cooked turkey bacon, chopped into small pieces or left whole
- 2 TBSPs of grated Parmesan cheese
- 2-4 TBSPs of Caesar salad dressing
- 2 8-inch or burrito-sized whole wheat tortillas

Yields: 2 wraps

Directions:

1. Place the greens, chicken, bacon, and Parmesan in a bowl. Add the dressing, and mix all ingredients together.
2. Divide the mixture into two equal servings, and spoon each serving onto their own tortilla, near the end closest to you.
3. Roll it up like you would a burrito. Use a plastic wrap, napkin or other material to hold the burrito together. You can also cut it in half or in thirds to make it easier for your kids to eat.

You can add carrot matchsticks and sliced bell pepper to the wraps for more texture and flavors.

Simple Chicken Parmesan Burger

Ingredients:

- 2 lb. of lean ground chicken or 8 oz. of pre-made ground chicken patties (You won't need any of the other ingredients if that's the case.)
- 1 ½ cup of shredded zucchini
- 2/3 cup of Panko bread crumbs
- 8 TBSPs of grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp of Italian seasoning or more
- 1 tsp of garlic powder
- ½ tsp of sea salt
- ½ tsp of black pepper
- 2 tsp of olive oil
- 2/3 cup of marinara sauce, homemade or store-bought
- 6-8 slices of provolone cheese
- 1 cup of spinach or other leafy green
- 6 whole-wheat burger buns or multi-grain burger buns (You can toast these before you place the patty on the buns.)

Directions:

1. Combine the first 8 ingredients in a large bowl with your hands. Divide the mixture into six parts, and form each part into patties.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook patties on each side for 5-7 minutes until browned on the outside.
3. Divide the marinara sauce equally for each burger patty, and pour the sauce over each patty. Then, place a slice or two of provolone cheese on top of each chicken patty.
4. Cover the skillet with a lid, and let the chicken cook and flavors mesh together for another 5-6 minutes. You can cook it for a little bit longer.
5. Turn off the heat, and top each patty with a handful of spinach. Transfer the patties to the bottom burger buns, and

Yields: 6 burgers

top it off with the top half of the bun.
Enjoy!

Easy Sweet and Sour Chicken

Ingredients:

Directions:

- 3 cups of breaded popcorn chicken, homemade or frozen
- 4-5 cups of cooked white, brown or mixed rice (less or more rice depending on how many people you're serving)
- 16 ounces of canned pineapple chunks (or less depending on taste)
- 2 large bell peppers, cut into 1-inch chunks
- ½ cup of apple cider vinegar
- 6 TBSPs of granulated sugar
- 4 TBSPs of cornstarch
- 4 TBSPs of low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp of chicken bouillon granules
- 16 ounces of canned sliced water chestnuts

Yields: 4-6 servings

1. If you bought frozen popcorn chicken, prepare it according to package instructions. If you haven't yet, prepare the rice as well and start cooking it.

2. Drain the pineapple juice in a separate bowl, and reserve both the juice and pineapple chunks. Add enough water to the pineapple juice to make 3 cups of liquid. Pour the pineapple juice and water mixture into a saucepan.

3. Add the bell pepper chunks into the sauce pan with the pineapple juice mixture, and bring the saucepan to a boil. Reduce the heat, and cover and simmer for 2-3 minutes until the bell peppers are slightly tender.

4. Mix the cider, sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce, and chicken bouillon granules together, and stir it into the saucepan. Continue stirring the sauce over medium heat until the mixture thickens and bubbles form. Then, cook and stir more for 2-3 minutes.

5. Add the reserved pineapple chunks, sliced water chestnuts, and cooked popcorn chicken to the sauce. Heat added ingredients. Prepare rice on plate, and spoon out sweet and sour chicken on top of rice. Serve and enjoy!

Asian Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

** You can substitute salad ingredients for pre-made salad mixes in stores.

- ½ cup of mayonnaise
- ¼ cup of honey
- 3 tsp of rice wine vinegar
- 2 tsp of Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp of toasted sesame oil
- ¼ tsp of salt
- ¼ tsp of black pepper
- 3-5 breaded and cooked chicken strips, sliced (You can also use grilled chicken.)
- 2 cups of chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 cup of chopped cabbage
- ½ – ¾ cup of chopped purple cabbage
- ½ – ¾ cup of matchstick carrots
- Sliced almonds for topping
- Mandarin orange slices from can, drained – optional
- Fried chow mein noodles for topping

Yields: 2 servings

Directions:

1. Put the mayonnaise, honey, rice wine vinegar, Dijon mustard, sesame oil, salt, and black pepper in a blender or food processor. Blend all ingredients together, and pour into a squeeze bottle or small bowl. Chill in the fridge until you're ready to use it.

2. Mix all salad ingredients together, including the chicken, almonds, and fried chow mein noodles, in a large bowl. If you need time to cook the breaded chicken strips, whether frozen or homemade, do that now before you take out the vegetables for the salad. Let the chicken cool at least for 10 minutes before you slice it and put it in with the vegetables.

3. Take the Asian salad dressing out from the fridge, and pour it over the salad. Toss to thoroughly coat the salad with dressing. Serve right away.

Dinner Recipes

Recipe Overview:

- [Easy and Healthy Salmon Patties](#)
- [Satisfying Stuffed Sweet Potatoes](#)
- [Veggie-licious Vegetable Soup](#)
- [Zucchini Pasta and Turkey Sausage Meatballs with Marinara](#)
- [Healthy Muffin-Sized Meatloaves](#)

<u>Easy and Healthy Salmon Patties</u>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Half a 14.7-oz. can of salmon in water, drained• Half a 6-oz. package of packaged chicken stuffing mix• ½ cup of shredded mozzarella or cheddar cheese• 6 TBSPs of chicken stock• Half a bunch of fresh parsley or one green onion, chopped• ½ TBSP of minced garlic or a few teaspoons of garlic powder to taste• 3-4 TBSPs of mayonnaise• ½ TBSP of lemon juice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl, and shape into six salmon patties. Chill for 10-25 minutes before cooking. You can also make them ahead of time and chill them for up to 24 hours.2. When ready to cook, heat olive oil in a skillet. Cook patties until golden brown on each side, approximately six minutes.3. Serve salmon patties with homemade tartar sauce or a leafy green salad with your favorite dressing. Serves 3 people, 2 salmon cakes per person.

Satisfying Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 medium sweet potatoes, scrubbed and cleaned• 4-6 slices of turkey bacon, diced into small pieces• 2 tsp of olive oil• 1 small to medium sweet or red onion, diced into small pieces• 2-3 small to medium cloves of garlic, minced• 3-5 cups of spinach or roughly chopped kale, packed• 1 bell pepper, diced into small pieces• 2-4 green scallions, chopped• 8 ounces of cream cheese• ½ cup of buttermilk• 2 tsp of sea salt• ½ tsp of black pepper• 2 tsp of olive oil• 4 TBSPs of grated Parmesan cheese•• Yields: 4-8 servings	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a roasting pan or baking sheet with foil, and poke the sweet potatoes with a fork. Place potatoes on the pan or baking sheet, and put potatoes in the oven for 45 minutes or until tender.2. Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a skillet until crisp and browned. Transfer to a plate covered in a layer or two of paper towels.3. Add the olive oil to the skillet, and put the chopped onion and bell pepper in the pan. Stir for 5-8 minutes until onions have softened and peppers have charred on the edges slightly. Add the garlic, and stir until fragrant, about 2-3 minutes. Add spinach or kale and chopped green onions in the skillet, and cover the pan. Cook until spinach or kale has wilted. Turn off heat, and set aside.4. Mix the cream cheese, buttermilk, sea salt, and black pepper together. Fold in

the spinach or kale mixture that you cooked.

5. When sweet potatoes are finished, let them cool for 5-10 minutes. Then, slice them down the middle, lengthwise, and open them up. Carefully remove the sweet potato filling, and add it to the spinach mixture and mix well. Coat the potato skins with olive oil, and spoon in the sweet potato mixture into the skins. Sprinkle the top with Parmesan cheese, and bake for another 15 minutes until skins have browned and turned crispy.

6. Remove the sweet potatoes from the oven, and top with turkey bacon bits. Serve with a small side salad.

Veggie-licious Vegetable Soup

Ingredients:

- 1.5 – 2 15-oz. cans of low-sodium lima beans or cannelloni beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 TBSPs of olive oil or other healthy fat
- 2 cups of chopped sweet, white or yellow onion
- 4-5 stalks of celery, chopped
- 3-4 medium carrots, chopped
- 2-3 small zucchinis or cucumbers, peeled and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- ½ – 1 cup of canned, drained corn or frozen corn
- 1 – 2 cups of chopped yellow squash or sweet potatoes, cooked – optional
- 1 – 2 cans of 14.5-oz. of canned tomatoes
- 2 tsp of dried thyme or other herb
- 1 tsp of dried sage or other herb
- 1 tsp of sea salt
- ½ freshly ground black pepper
- 64 ounces of low-sodium chicken broth or homemade chicken broth
- 4 cups of spinach, packed
- 2/3 cup of Parmesan cheese, grated

Yields: 8-12 servings

Directions:

1. Mash half the beans in a bowl with a potato masher and set aside.
2. Heat olive oil or other healthy fat in a large soup pot, and add the onion, celery, carrots, zucchinis or cucumbers, minced garlic, bell pepper, corn, squash or sweet potatoes, herbs, and seasonings into the pot. Stir everything together and cook until vegetables are tender, about 6-10 minutes.
3. Add the chicken broth and canned tomatoes. Bring the broth to a boil. Add the beans and spinach, and cook until the spinach leaves have wilted.
4. Serve in separate bowls, and sprinkle soup with Parmesan cheese.

Zucchini Pasta and Italian Sausage Meatballs

Ingredients:

- 6 zucchinis, washed
- 3 TBSPs of olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- A package of Italian sausages in casings
- Homemade or store-bought marinara sauce

Yields: 3-4 servings

Directions:

1. Use a julienne peeler to peel the zucchinis lengthwise and make noodles. Peel until you've reached the center of the zucchini where the seeds are. Then, flip over and continue peeling until the core of the zucchini is left.

2. Heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in a skillet, and add the zucchini in the skillet. Cook and stir for 1-2 minutes. Pour in the water, and cook zucchini for 5-8 minutes until the zucchini spaghetti has softened. (Make sure to check constantly or the zucchini pasta can get mushy.) Drain pasta, and season with salt and pepper in a separate bowl. Toss to evenly coat. Set aside.

3. Use a knife or kitchen shears to cut through the Italian sausage casings. You can choose how many sausages you want to use for your meal. Roll the sausage meat into small, round balls, and cook them in a skillet with olive oil. Transfer sausage balls to a plate with a layer of paper towel to drain the excess oil.

4. Put them back into the skillet, and pour in the marinara sauce. The amount depends on how many sausage balls you have and how much sauce you want.

5. Heat the marinara sauce through with the sausage balls for 5-10 minutes. Put the zucchini pasta in separate bowls, evenly divided, and add the Italian sausage and marinara sauce over the pasta. Enjoy this new, healthy twist to pasta!

You can also make this recipe with spaghetti squash or turkey, chicken or beef meatballs.

Healthy Muffin-Sized Meatloaves

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of ketchup
- ½ cup of Worcestershire sauce or more
- 2 lbs of lean ground beef, chicken or turkey
- 1 medium-large onion, chopped
- ½ cup of Italian-seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp of sea salt
- 1 tsp of dried oregano or other herb
- ¼ tsp of freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2-3 cups of cooked, wilted spinach – optional
- 1 cup or more of cheddar, pepperjack or other cheese, shredded – optional

Yields: 24 large meatloaf muffins
(Freeze and save the rest for later!)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and prepare a muffin pan with 6-8 large tins by coating it with cooking spray.
2. Whisk ketchup and Worcestershire sauce together in a small bowl and set aside.
2. Mix the rest of the ingredients in a large bowl, and divide the mixture into the muffin cups. Brush with ketchup mixture, and bake for 35-40 minutes.
3. Cool in muffin tin for 5-10 minutes before removing muffins from tins.
4. Serve with healthy mashed sweet potatoes or steamed and seasoned vegetables.

Your Mommy Exercise Plan

Now that you know what to eat to keep yourself healthy, it's time to get your body moving! But before you get into exercise mode, make sure that you get the O.K. from your doctor before you do any physical activity, especially if you've just had a baby. If you can't exercise yet or have to stick with light exercise, focus more on developing a healthy diet. Then, add the workouts later. Remember, your diet counts for most of your entire health and well-being.

To get started with your Mommy Exercise Plan, define your goal. Do you want to lose the baby weight, or do you simply want to get back into an exercising routine to maintain your health? A goal will help you keep on track, so don't go into exercising yet until you know why you want to do it. Then, you can center your whole workout routine around that goal to ensure you achieve it. Here are other tips to consider for your Mommy Exercise Plan:

1. Gradually add exercise back into your life. Even if you were super fit before you were pregnant and had kids, you can't jump back into high-impact or strenuous workouts right away; that'll only strain your body and put you at risk of injuries. Take your time and let your body adapt to your exercise routine. What you can do first is take 1-2 months and walk for 3-5 days a week for 15-30 minutes each day. Bring your kids, too, if you use a stroller still. The stroller will give you some resistance and help you build muscle while you walk. Also, you can use the stroller as an exercise tool: Push the stroller forward and lunge toward it with each step you take. Make sure to keep your back

straight and watch you knees; align them with your ankle and not over your foot. (FYI, if you're breastfeeding, you'll also see weight loss in the first few months after you've given birth. You don't have to focus so much on exercise to lose weight! Breastfeeding also helps burn calories.) Take it slow because your body has been through a lot after pregnancy. Don't push it too much. You'll exhaust yourself and be unhealthy instead of healthy.

2. Make time to exercise. If you're serious about getting back in shape, you have to make time to exercise. Take advantage of the time your baby naps to exercise instead of doing chores. Exercise during commercial breaks on TV when your kids are watching a show with you. (You can also get them active with you.) Wake up earlier in the mornings to go on a walk or bike ride around the neighborhood. You may not be used to the new routine yet, but over time, you'll get used to the new schedule. Your body will also naturally adapt to the new habit, so don't give up on exercise.

3. Build endurance slowly. If you're walking, walk at a faster pace and walk up hills. If you're bike riding, ride up steeper hills and go on small bike trails. Don't be impatient about exercise. You'll build better endurance and stamina by going slower compared with going faster.

4. Have a relaxed exercise routine. On some days, you just don't feel like working out, but the nagging voice in your head tells you that you need to get moving. If you're prone to having one of these days, go with a back-up workout plan, such as doing a basic yoga routine

for 30 minutes while the baby is napping or the kids are playing. You'll feel better knowing that you're getting a workout in even when you're not sweating up a storm.

5. Use a calendar to keep track of your workout schedule. A dry-erase calendar board is ideal for this since you can use it countless times without wasting one sheet of paper. Put the calendar where you'll see it every day and be reminded of your fitness goals and schedules. You'll be more motivated to do your workouts when you have something constantly reminding you about them.

6. Motivate yourself in every way. Exercising can sound like a drag to most people, and that's understandable in this day and age where sedentary lifestyles are the new trends. But if you're ready to change your life around and make it through your workouts, motivation is the key to your exercise engine.

One way to keep exercise on your mind is to put your workout clothes, shoes, and other equipment next to your bed. When you wake up, you'll see them right away and know that it's time for you to workout, whether you like it or not. Another way is to find a workout partner. This keeps you accountable knowing someone else is counting on you to work out with them and your less likely to skip out on a workout too.

Also, you can find motivating quotes online – on Pinterest especially – and print or write them out. Put them all over your house or a

certain room in your home so that you can read them throughout the day. Images of people with the 'perfect body' in your eyes can be used, too, but only if you use them as motivation, not a tool for comparison and beating yourself up.

7. Download a fitness app. If you're up-to-date with the technology of today's society, a smart phone app shouldn't be a foreign concept to you. With fitness app, you'll have a fitness aid right at your fingertips. A few great fitness apps for moms include:

- *NIKE Training Club App* – There's no better fitness supporter out there than NIKE, an elite fitness company famous for its slogan “Just Do It.” With the free NIKE Training Club app, you get over 100 workout routines to get your body in tip-top shape. This app also helps track your fitness progress so you're always getting motivated to move up the fitness ladder. Available for Android and iOS.
- *Pact* – Once called GymPact, Pact is a perfect fitness motivator app. Basically, Pact works by motivating you with money. Once you make a commitment for the week, whether it's to exercise or eat healthier, you enter the amount of money you're willing to risk if you don't achieve your goal. If you go through with your goal, you earn cash instead of losing it. Learn more about the Pact app [here](#). Available for Android and iOS.
- *Lose It!* – A handy weight loss goal app, Lose It! customizes the best fitness plan for you when you enter your weight or health goals. Lose It! has several features that will help you lose

weight or become healthier. One fantastic and convenient Lose It! feature is the scanner where you can scan bar codes of food you eat and make it easier to log for your day. Learn more about Lose It! at the [official app website](#). Available for Android and iOS.

- *MyFitnessPal* – One of the most used weight loss and fitness app in the app world, MyFitnessPal is an excellent app that will help you stay on track with healthy eating and exercise goals. The diary feature gives you a way to record workouts and food intake throughout the day. Available for Android and iOS.
- *Daily Yoga* – Need to relieve some stress? Download the Daily Yoga app and get access to more than 45 high-quality videos featuring yoga routines. You'll get your own personal yoga coach for free with the Daily Yoga app! Available for Android and iOS.

The golden rule of maintaining a healthy lifestyle is to eat healthy and exercise regularly. You don't need a fad diet or a popular program to get you into shape. Keep your eating and fitness plans simple, and your life will be simplified, too – a major plus for all moms who have hectic lives.

The Top Five Basic Positive Habits to Develop

Your physical health isn't the only health to focus on. You have your emotional, mental, and spiritual health to watch out for as well. To get your body in a state of harmony, your health needs to be nurtured. That's why it's important to develop healthy and positive habits for

yourself so that you'll stay balanced for life. Beneficial habits to consider are listed below, so read through them and see if they're the right ones to add to your lifestyle.

1. Mind your own business. It's easy to compare ourselves to other people we think are better than us, but what good does that do? Unless you're using someone's image as a 'perfect body' motivator to get out of your couch potato mode, comparing yourself does nothing but damage your self-esteem. If you compare your kids, spouse, other family members, friends, etc., to other people, you'll also affect your loved ones in a negative way. It's best to always mind your own business.

So what if someone has four Mercedes in their driveway? It doesn't mean that's right for you and your lifestyle. Get in the habit of minding your own business. If you catch yourself comparing, pinch yourself so that you develop an aversion to comparing, known as aversion conditioning. If you catch yourself comparing with other people on websites, close the tab or window. Focus on what you do have and be grateful for all that you have right now.

2. Plan ahead. As a mom with more responsibilities on her shoulders, planning ahead is going to be a habit that will help you find more time in your day and get chores done quicker. From your family meals to the week, many parts of your life can be planned ahead of time. Don't end up scrambling and stressing yourself out unnecessarily, so take at least one day a week to plan ahead.

3. Let it go. So your child knocked down your favorite China or your spouse forgot to put his dirty laundry in the hamper. What do you do? Well, most moms tend to react negatively to small situations, but that won't make anything better. Let go of wanting to control everyone in your house. Let go of people making mistakes or doing things you don't like. Don't wallow in resentment and anger; you'll only make the household more uncomfortable.

Pick your own battles, and learn to let go. This doesn't mean to become a doormat, though. But if you make small situations seem bigger than they really are, it's not worth the side effects it has on you and the people around you. Be proactive instead of reactive. For example, if your partner tends to throw his clothes in one spot instead of in the laundry basket, put a laundry basket or hamper in that one spot. Solve problems instead of creating more of them; you'll get more accomplished that way.

4. Stop worrying. Yes, it's going to be a challenge for moms to not worry about their precious little ones and everything else in life, but what good does it do to worry about everything? Not only does worrying cause you to feel bad, but it also affects your physical health, such as causing breakouts and wrinkles (yikes!). Learn to find ways to relax e.g., through meditation, yoga, and exercise.

Although it's okay to worry about your kids, it's more important to think positive about them. If you worry about your kids being bullied at school, but, in reality, they're not, focus on how your children are

having a peaceful time at school. Wish the best for them rather than worrying about the worst case scenario. It doesn't mean that you're going to be ignorant about the dangers of the outside world, so to speak. Be aware that there's a possibility of bad things happening to your kids and accept them. Accepting is different from approving. You just accept the possibilities of bad situations happening so that you're aware of them. Approving, in a sense, is when you agree with something happening and wanting them to happen. Stay positive and always switch your thoughts to something more pleasant when you start to worry and are aware of it.

5. Learn to say no. Do you *really* have to do that extra project for work or do laundry ten times a week? Evaluate your schedule and tasks, and eliminate anything that doesn't need to be done. Don't fill up your day with busy work or overload yourself with assignments. Give yourself a breather and avoid burning out. Stand up for yourself and your precious time!

Dealing with Stress the Mommy Way

Stress is an all too familiar word to you by now, but it's not something that you have to surrender to. Many solutions to deal with stress are available, and you'll find a narrowed-down list of these solutions in this section. You don't have to try something new or do something extreme to release your stress. Try out one or all of these stress-coping tips to get back control over your emotions and mind:

1. Know your stress triggers. Take note of everything that touches a nerve and makes you stress out, such as your kids not behaving or not getting everything done in the day. Write down these stress triggers, and go over them and figure out solutions for each. Go over your list at least three times a day so you're prepared for the situations you listed. Not only does it help you recognize when you need to calm down, but it'll also prevent your kids from adopting negative stress-coping habits.

2. Get in the habit of deep breathing. Taking deep breaths whenever you're feeling stressed is a great way to calm down and lower your cortisone levels. Whenever you feel stress coming up, take a few deep breaths and walk away from the situation (after checking that it's safe to first, especially around kids). You don't have to be completely calm when you return to a situation. You'll just have a clearer mind and think more objectively about it.

3. Laugh. You may not realize it, but with all the stress you're under, you may not be laughing as much as you can be. Laughter is the best medicine after all! So, make time to watch 15 minutes of a funny show or read a hilarious book to tickle your funny bone. Have more fun with your kids and laugh with them as well. You'll bond and feel less stressed with them.

4. Find a mommy mentor. You can find a support group in your local area or online to help guide you with mommy and everyday life troubles. Be each other's support whenever it gets tough being a

mom. Knowing that you're not alone is one of the most uplifting feelings in all history of emotions, so don't be afraid to reach out when you need to. You don't need to do this alone.

5. Create a daily routine and stick with it. If you feel like your mind and life are in a mess, then it's time to reevaluate how you go about your day and set up a routine that best fits your family's lifestyle. Routines help you stay organized so you don't go running around like a chicken with its head cut off. Also, your kids will benefit from routines, too, since they'll feel more secure since they know what to expect. Your day will flow more smoothly when a routine has been set up.

Extra Important Tip: Take time for yourself. Your Mommy Guilt Monster may be rearing its head right about now after you read that sentence, but don't let it fool you. Taking time for yourself is essential to being a better, nicer mom. Whether it's just 10 minutes or a full hour a day, get your 'me' time because you deserve it. Know that you deserve it and accept it with welcoming arms. Don't let your time be lost in your daily activities. Use this time to recollect yourself and recuperate. ***There's nothing wrong with doing that.*** What's wrong is not giving yourself what you know you deserve. Set a time each day for your alone time so you can relieve stress, get ready for the day with a positive attitude or any other goal you want to accomplish.

One of the main concerns when it comes to taking time for one's self is the Mommy Guilt. Many moms don't think that it's possible for them

to take time for themselves because it's selfish. Here's the thing: Humans are naturally selfish beings. But they're also naturally caring, loving beings, too. Just because you take time for yourself doesn't mean you stop loving your kids. In fact, you taking time for yourself shows them that it's okay to do things for yourself. Why do things for others all the time? Focusing on you, even for 10 minutes, is going to make a world of difference.

Another concern moms have is that they think spending time just by themselves is going to cut into their quality family time. First, taking time for yourself is just, at most, a couple of hours per day. You have your family with you all the time, so you can take some time off to reconnect with who you are. You're a woman who has passions, interests, and individuality. Don't risk it because you force yourself to be the so-called perfect mom and never pay attention to herself.

Second, you're not going to cut into quality family time when you schedule 'you time' just right. For example, wake up a little earlier or stay up a bit later than usual. If you don't want to take a time for yourself every day and prefer to take some time off during the weekend, get a babysitter or drop off your kids at the daycare center for a couple of hours while you run errands by yourself or go to a spa. Depending on how you want to spend your alone time, you can make it work and not cut into family time; just don't use 'you time' to avoid responsibilities.

Staying Positive in Motherhood

Being a mother is completely different from being a single woman. You're faced with more obstacles that you have to overcome, and you have more people to take care of. Sometimes, life pushes you around and makes you feel like motherhood is just too hard to handle. But you go through it anyway because you know that's what you have to do. You're a mom, and you'll play that role gladly. Even though you get negative about motherhood and are swarmed with all sorts of life events that make you fall down, you know deep down that you have to get back up and move forward.

Changing Your Perspective

Being a mom can make you susceptible to having a pessimistic view on life, making you feel sorry for yourself and guilty all the time. But what's most important, whether you're a mom or the President, is that you be happy. Going through life with a negative perspective isn't going to get you anywhere but rock bottom. No matter what you're facing today as a mother, changing your perspective to a positive one is what's going to get you out of the gloomy rut. Focus on your happiness, and continue to move forward. To help you through those times where you feel pessimistic, here are several tips for you to make it through stronger and happier:

- 1. Be positive for your kids.** This doesn't mean that you can't have a few days where you crack from all the negativity. If it makes you feel better, cry it out. But the point here is to stay positive for your kids. You don't have to hide anything from them, but showing them

that you're still optimistic and can move forward is something your children can learn from you. They'll use that method to move on from events in their own life. Use your own positivity to encourage your kids and teach them a valuable life lesson.

2. Fight worries with logic. Most of the time, our concerns aren't logical at all; they're mostly fueled with emotions. Don't let your emotions control your behavior or thoughts. Use logic against them to make them disappear. For instance, if you're worrying about your child not eating lunch at school, you can ask them about it when he or she gets home or talk to his or her teacher. Don't let yourself constantly worry and stress out if you can solve it with a logical solution.

3. Be grateful for at least one thing in your life each day.

Gratitude is powerful because it brings out love and appreciation from within. Take a minute out of your day to focus on feelings of love and appreciation for at least one thing in your life. To get you started, here are a few things in life that you can be grateful for right now:

- Breathing
- Food
- Water
- Your family
- Walking
- Driving
- Eyesight

- Your home

If you want to take expressing gratitude a bit further, make it a habit to say “Thank you” with every step you take in the mornings. You can also say “Thank you” whenever you're feeling down, even if you don't feel particularly grateful. Your thoughts and words create your feelings, so expressing thankfulness in your mind or aloud will help you feel better even just a little.

4. Find the good in every situation. No matter how bad a situation may seem, there's always something positive to be seen. Finding that one positive element is what can get you out of the negative hole you're in. It may be difficult to do at first, but if you want to feel happier, search for the good in all situations and focus on that aspect.

5. Take a nap. When you're feeling down and negative, you may feel more tired than usual. Take advantage of that and take a nap during the day for 20-30 minutes. Naps relax you and help you feel less negative and stressed after you wake up. If you can't fall asleep, simply closing your eyes for at least 10 minutes will help boost your energy and bring you closer to happier emotions.

Don't put all your energy into pessimism, and avoid using it as a crutch. It's not worth the toll it takes on your mental, emotional, and physical health. It also affects the people around you, so do your best to stay positive. If you fall into the pessimism pit one day, that's okay – get yourself back up and keep going.

Balancing Your Life

Balancing your life may sound like a big, fat lie, especially when you have unpredictable elements in your life (e.g., kids). However, balancing your life out and making it more manageable is possible and achievable. No matter if you're a working mom or a stay-at-home mom, you can use any or all of the tips below to make a balanced life no longer a myth.

1. Find a fantastic daycare center or babysitter for your children.

Finding the best childcare for your kids is one of the ways for you to be reassured about running errands, going to work, etc. Don't hastily choose a daycare center or a babysitter to watch your kids while you're away. Take your time choosing because your kids are going to be in a stranger's hands, so you want it to be a good stranger. Talk to other parents or look up daycare centers and babysitters in your area.

If you're thinking about using a daycare center, set a time to check out the place and talk to the staff there. Observe the other children there and see how you feel about the place; listen to your instinct and don't be fooled by marketing tactics the daycare center may be using.

If you're considering hiring a babysitter, always do background checks and check work history. Plan a paid play date with the babysitter so you can see how he or she interacts with your kids. Prepare questions to ask the babysitter as well. You want to get as much information as possible and interview multiple babysitters before you decide on one. You can also have 1-2 back-up babysitters

in case your main babysitter isn't available for a time. For babysitters, you can check out [Care.com](https://www.care.com).

It might take a while for you to find a fantastic babysitter or daycare center, but it's worth it when you feel great about the people who are taking care of your kids in your place.

2. Prepare for your day the night before. From the diaper bag to lunches, prepare everything you need for the next day the night before. In the morning, everything will go smoother and your whole family will be able to go with the flow. Put bags, keys, and other items you need for the next day near the front door so you can go out right away without forgetting a thing.

3. Make a family calendar. Large dry-erase calendar boards make great family calendars. Assign dry-erase markers to each person and label them so everyone knows which marker color is whose. Place the family calendar somewhere everyone will see, such as near the front door or in the kitchen. At the end of each week, have a family meeting and determine next week's activities. Get everyone to note down all their activities and events for the week and share them during the family meeting. With a family calendar, everyone knows everyone else's schedule, so you won't have to wonder what's going on in each other's life. You'll also know everyone's free times and schedule in quality family time.

4. Organize your personal to-do list. A great way to organize your own to-do list is to carry a journal or notebook with you everywhere you go. Use it to jot down any tasks you need to do. Then, create a daily to-do list and choose three of the most important tasks for the day. Complete those, and, if you have time, you can work on more tasks from the list of things you need to do. To make it easier for you to go through your tasks list, separate tasks into groups or categories, such as personal and work.

The chart below shows an example of separating your tasks into different categories:

<u>Daily To-Do List</u>		
<i>Work</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Family</i>
1. Send in report.	1. Meditate for five minutes.	1. Prepare meals for the week
2. Reply to emails from the past few days.	2. Walk around park for 30 minutes.	2. Go to Jonny's band recital @ 7 p.m.
3. Complete Assignment #3 for boss.	3. Finish reading book.	3. Get the kids to clean their rooms

5. Focus on yourself for once. If you feel like your life is out of control or you're juggling too much at once, it means you need a breather – and a big one! Your life may still be crazy busy, but you'll feel more balanced within yourself. That's where true balance begins.

Understand that everything in your life isn't always going to go as you planned. Don't tighten your grip on your life in attempt to control it. You never know what's going to happen, so you don't have to have a picture-perfect, day-to-day lifestyle. Give yourself and your family some wiggle room for those not-in-the-usual-routine moments, and you'll live a less stressed, happier lifestyle.

Chapter 4: Advanced Breast Milk Feeding

One way or another, as a mom, you're going to be faced with this choice: breastfeeding or breast pumping and bottle feeding. Because many mothers have concerns about nursing from their breasts, using a breast pump and feeding their babies from a bottle is another option. In this section, you'll learn the basics of breast pumping and bottle feeding so that you have the chance to compare breastfeeding and breast pumping to see which is the best for you. Let's get started!

The Basics of Breast Pumping

Whether you need a break from breastfeeding or plan to go back to work, breast pumping can be a lifesaver for you and your little one. Breast pumping makes it easy for you to give your baby natural, nutritious milk so you don't have to feel guilty about using formula and worrying about if your baby isn't getting enough nutrients. Also, breast pumping allows you to have a more convenient way of feeding your baby; you'll be able to get your spouse to help with feeding the baby, too.

When to Breast Pump

The most common question that moms have about breast pumping is when they can start. Professionals say that you should breastfeed for at least 2-3 weeks before you start bottle feeding. This is to prevent nipple confusion, which is a condition where the baby doesn't

recognize the mother's nipple and doesn't know how to suckle on a breast.

There are many reasons why moms breast pump, and it's a personal decision that you should make based on your own experience with your baby along with professional advice from your doctor. For instance, if your baby has a condition that doesn't allow you to nurse him or her, breast pumping would be the only option you have to provide milk for your child. Other possible reasons for breast pumping include you going back to work, experiencing common breastfeeding conditions such as engorgement, build a good breast milk supply, and having a personal body condition that doesn't allow you to breastfeed.

Frequency of Breast Pumping

Breast pumping frequently is very important because you want to maintain a high milk supply and ensure that you have enough milk for your baby. Babies typically need to be fed 8-12 times per day, so you should be breast pumping every two hours at least. You should also take the time to breast pump in the early mornings, especially between 1:00 a.m. to 5 a.m. These times represent when your milk production hormones are at their peak, so you can expect to pump out more milk during this time compared with breast pumping during the day. After you have reached the desired breast milk supply amount and your body can maintain that same breast milk supply, you can reduce the numbers of times you use your breast pump. It

takes about 10-12 weeks to maintain a good breast milk supply. During this time, your body will adapt to the supply-and-demand of your breast milk and will naturally produce the amount of milk you've been pumping out.

Storing and Keeping Breast Milk Fresh

There are several breast milk storage options, and one of them can be found with the breast pump you purchase. Many breast pump sets come with specially made bottles for storing breast milk. However, if your breast pump set doesn't come with its own bottles, you can use regular baby bottles to store your breast milk.

Another way to store your milk is with nursing bags, which are made just for storing breast milk. If you plan to use nursing bags, make sure that you write the date you pumped milk on each one so you know which milk is the freshest. Also, store milk in small quantities – about 3-4 ounces – to make thawing faster if you freeze the nursing bags.

If you're breast pumping to stock up on breast milk, the best option for you is to freeze the breast milk. Your milk will last 3-6 months in the freezer. If you want to preserve your breast milk for longer, you can use a deep freezer, and your milk will last 6-12 months.

Whenever you freeze breast milk, thaw it completely first and feed your baby within 24 hours. If you want to use your refrigerator to preserve just pumped milk, your breast milk will last up to one week.

If you notice a change of color in your breast milk after storing it in the refrigerator or freezer, don't panic – it doesn't mean that your breast milk has gone bad; it's natural for breast milk to change colors.

Another note about storing milk: You can add freshly pumped milk to chilled milk that you have already stored in the fridge. This won't affect the fresh or stored milk.

How to Choose the Right Breast Pump

The number one rule when purchasing a breast pump is to always go with a high-quality one. Don't worry about the price; instead, think of it as a major investment that's vital for you as a mother and for your baby. Even though all breast pumps ultimately do the same thing, there are differences among all of the breast pumps out there. These differences include:

- Suction power;
- Manual or electric breast pumps;
- The amount of suction cycles that the breast pump can produce.

Manual Breast Pumps vs. Electric Breast Pumps

There are two types of breast pumps available: manual and electric. It's highly recommended that you invest in an electric one because you're guaranteed more suction, more accuracy, and more breast milk production when you use one. An electric breast pump is more

suited for mothers who plan to breast pump regularly since it's faster compared to a manual breast pump. You can also do other activities while you breast pump, such as reading, folding laundry, etc.

However, the suction of electric breast pump is stronger compared to a manual one, and that can cause moms to feel uncomfortable.

Another downside of an electric breast pump is that it makes noise, which can disturb your baby's sleep if you breast pump near him or her.

A manual breast pump is cheaper than the electric breast pump, so many moms do opt for it due to the price. But the problem is that a manual breast pump is more inconvenient and will tire you out quickly since you have to keep pumping with your hands. This type of breast pump is better for moms who don't plan to breast pump all the time and can handle the extra work that goes into it.

There are also breast pump sets that have manual, electric, and battery-powered extensions, so you can use them interchangeably at your convenience.

Features of a Breast Pump Set to Look Out For:

- *Pump Cycle* – Breastfed babies typically suck 45-55 times per minute. This is known as the pump cycle. A breast pump should be able to match or be close to the sucking speed of a baby so that you can draw out more milk.

- *Portability* – If you ever need to take your breast pump outside of your home, you should consider the portability of the breast pump set. Check the weight of the breast pump, and see if there's a bag for it as well when you purchase the set. The bag should also be portable-friendly.
- *Breast Pumping Action* – Choose a pump that fits your lifestyle. There are two known breast pumping action types:
 - Single Pump: Where you pump one breast at a time, great for moms who breast pump occasionally.
 - Double Pump: Where you can pump two breasts at the same time, excellent for moms who breast pump often.
- *Noise Level* – Electric pumps run on motors, so be cautious of the motor size of these types of breast pumps. The larger the motors, the quieter they will be; the smaller the motors, the louder they will be.
- *Durability* – If you plan to breast pump frequently, durability is a crucial feature. You want a breast pump that will support your goal of pumping breast milk regularly.

Choosing the Right Bottles

Although some breast pump sets come with bottles of their own, you may purchase a breast pump set that doesn't provide you with baby bottles. To choose the right baby bottles, read the following tips:

- Make sure that the bottles are BPA-free. BPA is a chemical that has been proven to link cancer and other ailments. That's why

the you should find baby bottles that are labeled BPA-free. Glass baby bottles are the best choice because they're always BPA-free. Plastic bottles made from polypropylene are safe, too.

- Pay attention to the nipple of the baby bottle. Due to the possibility of a latex allergy, baby bottles with silicone nipples are the best choice. You should also consider the nipple shape, and there are three types:
 - Orthodontic – Helps boost and improve teeth growth in babies.
 - Bell-shaped – A traditional shape for a baby bottle nipple.
 - Flat-topped – A recent baby bottle nipple shape that resembles a breast.
- The milk flow from the baby bottle is another factor that you should consider when you go to buy baby bottles. Two types of milk flow exists: fast and slow. To tell the difference, the fast milk flow makes the milk come out quickly and easily from the bottle while the slow milk flow takes more effort to make the milk come out. The slow milk flow is better for newborns since they're not used to sucking and swallowing yet.
- Make sure that the bottles you plan to purchase are easy to hold and can be transported easily whenever you go out. You should check if the bottles can be easily cleaned as well.

Tips for Successful Breast Pumping

Now that you know the basics of breast pumping, let's go over tips that can help improve your experience with it.

1. Stick to a breast pumping routine. Although having a routine will help you feel balanced and organized, another benefit of having a breast pumping routine is conditioning your body to produce milk at certain times. A random breast pumping routine will only confuse your body and create an irregular milk production schedule. Also, find out the best time for you to breast pump; it could be in the mornings after the first feeding of the day or late at night. This factor will help you determine a better routine.

2. Start pumping and storing. Within the first few weeks after your baby is born, start pumping and storing your milk a little at a time.

3. Relax. Breast pumping doesn't have to be difficult to go through. All you need to do is focus on something else while you breast pump. Look at pictures of your baby to help you relax and remind yourself that what you're doing is beneficial for your baby. Listen to an audiobook or watch a movie to get your mind off breast pumping. Relaxing will help your body release more milk since you won't be tense. Another way to relax is to take a warm shower, which will help increase milk production and blood flow due to the heat.

4. Never skip a breast pumping session. It may be tedious to keep breast pumping, but you should never skip a session. That will only affect you negatively and possibly prevent you from producing more milk. It takes several weeks for the body to adjust to the amount of

milk it needs to produce permanently, so hang in there and keep pumping!

5. Keep track of how much milk you produce. Use a spreadsheet or small notebook to keep track of how much milk you produce after each breast pumping session. By doing this, you'll know if your breast milk production has decreased or becomes irregular.

Another note about breast pumping: You can use the tips in this e-book for increasing your milk supply to help you pump out more milk. Even if you choose to breast pump, you don't have to feel guilty about it! You can bond with your baby in other ways besides breastfeeding. You're also feeding your little one with your nutrient-rich breast milk, so there's nothing to feel guilty over. Just be sure you use the best breast pump and baby bottles or nursing bags.

Other Breastfeeding Tools for You

Besides a breast pump, other tools can be added to your daily breastfeeding routine to make it easier for you to go through. Even though breastfeeding is natural, some moms still struggle with it, so these tools can help make breastfeeding less troublesome. Here's a list of several breastfeeding items that you might want to get for yourself:

- Nipple Shield: This flexible nursing accessory makes breastfeeding less painful and improves your baby's latch.

Nipple shields are made with a few different resources: rubber and silicone. If you want to use a nipple shield, always go with a silicone-made one; it'll be easier for your baby to suck on and give him or her an easier time latching on to your breast. The nipple shield is a temporary solution, and it's best used as a last resort. This device can prevent your baby from getting enough milk, so it's recommended that you don't use it in the first couple of weeks after birth. You should also speak to a lactation consultant when you plan to use a nipple shield.

- Baby Scale: Investing in a baby scale can help you determine if your baby is getting enough milk. Your baby's weight is one of the key factors that you should observe. Even if you take your baby to your doctor for regular check-ups, having a scale at home can help ease your worries when you're not at the doctor's.
- Nursing Pads: Worried about your nipples leaking milk and creating wet spots on your shirt? Use nursing pads to avoid those embarrassing stains. All you need to do is slip them in your bra in front of your boobs, and you're safe from a humiliating experience. You can choose from cotton nursing pads that you can wash and reuse or disposable ones.
- Breast Therapy Cool and Warm Relief Gel Pads: If you're suffering from engorgement, getting relief pads for your breasts is a great way to ease that pain. These gel pads can be placed inside your bra, so you can make it a hands-off breast therapy session.

- Nursing Tank Tops: If you're not comfortable showing half your body when you're nursing in public or even at home, get tank tops that are made specially for nursing. With these tank tops, you don't have to lift up your shirt anymore. You can nurse comfortably and get the support you need with nursing tank tops. Purchase several tanks in various colors so you'll be able to stay stylish while you're nursing as well.
- Nursing Bra: Many nursing bra brands are on the market, and some popular ones are the Bravado Body Silk Seamless Nursing Bra, Nizo Wear nursing bras, and A Pea in a Pod. Nursing bras are more for convenience than discreetness, so pairing a nursing bra and tank together may be beneficial for you. Wearing a nursing bra at home also works well.
- Milkscreen Test Strips: If you're concerned about having alcohol in your breast milk after drinking, Milkscreen's popular test strips are the perfect tool to use to see if your breast milk is safe for your baby. Even when there's a tiny amount of alcohol in your breast milk, the Milkscreen test strip will show up as positive, so you won't have to worry about feeding your baby tainted breast milk anymore.
- Nursing Sling: There are several types of nursing slings, such as the baby pouch sling, ring sling, and wrap-around sling. With a sling, you can do so much more than nursing your baby. From chores to grocery shopping, nursing slings provide you with a way to keep your baby close to you and allow you to breastfeed in a discreet and comfortable manner.

- [Itzbeen Pocket Nanny Baby Care Timer](#): Carrying a journal and pen around to log your nursing times can be a hassle, so the Itzbeen Pocket Nanny Baby Care Timer can save you time. Perfect for the sleep-deprived mommy, the Itzeen Baby Care Timer is convenient and helps you remember when your baby was last fed and more. The pocket size makes it an easy travel companion.

Mommy Reminder: Make sure to include lactation supplements, such as [Mother's Select Nursing & Lactation Plus](#), to boost your milk supply. With lactation supplements, you won't have to get anxious over not having enough milk for your little one.

Reasons to Love Breastfeeding

Before you became a mother, you may have heard many rumors about breastfeeding from the women around you. Whether those rumors made you afraid to breastfeed or dislike it in some way, the way to know if breastfeeding is right for you or if you'd love breastfeeding is to try it and come up with your own breastfeeding story. Don't let other people's experiences ruin your own encounter with breastfeeding. If you're iffy about breastfeeding or you just need to be reminded of why breastfeeding is amazing, the reasons below can help inspire you to love breastfeeding:

1. You get to watch your baby get super excited to see your breasts. How adorable is it to see babies get excited whenever their moms take out their breasts for feeding time? Your little one is

conditioned to know when he or she is getting fed, and seeing your breasts can get your baby squirming around adorably, anticipating Mommy's milk. It's a priceless moment that can only happen when you're breastfeeding.

2. You save money *and* provide organic, healthy milk for your baby. Formula is expensive, especially when you purchase it over time. Breast milk is natural and nutritious; you know where it's coming from, and you're giving your baby nature's best product. There's nothing more rewarding than knowing that you're feeding your baby an incredible food source that'll aid in growth and development.

3. Breastfeeding is simple. You don't have bottles to sterilize or clean. You don't have to worry about forgetting formula or bottles at home. Everything you need for your baby is right on your chest!

4. Breastfeeding gives you a break from a hectic schedule. Once you get the hang of breastfeeding, it'll be more relaxing for you and your baby. You'll be able to look forward to breastfeeding sessions since you know you'll get to relax with your child and be in your own world. You can also play some soothing music in the background to help you and your baby relax even more.

5. You'll lose weight while breastfeeding. After the baby weight you gained, one of the top priorities you have after birth is to lose it, right? While you can't exercise vigorously during the first few weeks after giving birth, you can breastfeed instead and be able to lose weight

and keep it off. Of course, your diet also has something to do with your weight loss, so make sure to eat healthy while you're breastfeeding as well.

6. The priceless bonding time. Snuggling and holding your baby is a given when you breastfeed. Watching your baby while he or she feeds and building that connection is a timeless treasure for moms and babies. This doesn't mean that you won't get to connect with your baby if you feed from a bottle, though, so don't feel guilty if you choose bottle feeding. Breastfeeding just means you get to hold your baby closer to you and feel that tight bond more.

7. You reduce the risk of illnesses and ailments. Breastfeeding can prevent bone loss, osteoporosis, breast cancer, and other health conditions. Not only is breastfeeding healthy for your baby, but it's also healthy for you.

8. You don't need to worry about your period coming every month. Your body is still going through many changes after you've given birth, and Mother Nature isn't going to come knocking for at least a few months. However, it does depend on each mom, but some moms may experience 12 or more period-free months.

9. Breastfeeding encourages you to maintain a healthy diet. What you put in your body also comes out, and your breast milk will contain nutrients from the food you eat. As a mom, the natural desire to give

the best to your baby will encourage you to eat and maintain a healthy, balanced diet.

10. Your baby's poop will be healthier looking and less foul-smelling. Compared with poop from babies who are on formula, babies who are breastfed have healthier poop. You don't have to be K.O.'d every time you change your baby's diaper when you breastfeed.

Tons of benefits come with breastfeeding. If it's not for you, though, then you don't have to do it or feel guilty about it. You make your own decision for you and your baby. Despite all the benefits it provides, you can still reap benefits from other feeding methods, such as breast pumping.

Breast Care 101

All that breastfeeding or breast pumping is going to take a toll on your breasts, and that's why you need to be more attentive to them. Taking care of your breasts is essential, so check out the following tips to discover how you can keep your breasts in tip-top shape:

1. Don't wash your breasts with soap. Soap dries out your skin and removes the natural oil that moisturize your breasts. All you need to do is wash your boobs in warm water, and no other substance is needed to clean them. The warm water will promote milk production as well.

2. Buy nursing tanks or nursing bras that aren't too tight. Let your boobs breathe with a support and roomy tank or bra. Choose nursing tanks or nursing bras made from cotton, which is a more loose and comfortable for your breasts.

3. Change nursing pads frequently. To prevent common breastfeeding problems from occurring, such as thrush and sore nipples, make sure you change nursing pads often if you plan to use them. The constant rubbing against your breast can cause breastfeeding issues.

4. When removing your baby from your breast, don't pull him or her off. Pulling your child off from your breast will increase your chances of sore nipples and other common breastfeeding problems. Instead, use your pinky finger and insert it in your baby's mouth from the corner. Your baby should release your breast after you do this.

5. Talk to your healthcare provider or lactation consultant before you use creams and other topical treatments on your breasts. Topical treatments for your nipples and breasts may not be safe for your baby to ingest, so that's why it's important that you talk to a specialist before you try any over-the-counter or prescribed topical treatments.

If you want to learn more about how to take care of your breasts if you're suffering from a common breastfeeding condition, be sure to re-visit [Chapter 2: Breastfeeding Complications and Solutions](#).

Weaning Your Baby Off Breastfeeding

Ah, it's that time of your child's life when you start to wean him or her off breastfeeding and he or she starts to grow up. It's a bittersweet time for some moms, but you can always tease your kids about breastfeeding later when they're all grown-up! When you're ready to wean your baby off breastfeeding, whether it's because you're going back to work or he or she doesn't need breastfeeding anymore, it can be a challenge. Here are a few tips to help you wean your baby off breastfeeding successfully:

1. Pick the right time for you to wean your baby off

breastfeeding. Although the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests moms to breastfeed at least the first six months of a baby's life, many moms still nurse well over that duration, up to two years old. However, stopping the breastfeeding process is ultimately a personal decision. Do what's right for you and your baby, and choose the right time to wean him or her off breastfeeding for good. If you need a second opinion, talk to your doctor or a lactation consultant for more professional advice.

2. Watch your baby's reactions. Even though your baby can't talk yet, he or she can still communicate with you through body language. Observe how your baby reacts to breastfeeding. Is he or she starting to cry or whine when you breastfeed? Is your little one showing any interest in food when you eat? Has your baby gained at least double his or her initial weight? If your baby is starting to show possible signs of not wanting to be breastfed anymore, jot down these observations

and talk to your doctor. Don't ignore any signs, either. Your baby knows when he or she wants to get off breast milk.

3. Plan out your weaning schedule. Having a plan in place will increase weaning success, so settle for a date where you want to wean your baby off breastfeeding completely. Don't wean your baby cold turkey. Once you've decided it's time to start weaning, cut out one breastfeeding session every 5-7 days so your body doesn't go into shock. Create a daily routine or plan to start getting your baby off nursing to work toward that goal.

4. Make sure nothing stressful or drastic is happening in your life right now. Stressful life circumstances make it harder for you to wean your baby. Let any high-stress situations settle down before you start weaning.

5. Start introducing food in your baby's diet. Since you're weaning your baby off nursing, it's recommended that you supplement with solid foods. Babies are typically ready to eat solid food after the first 4-6 months, but you should still talk to your doctor to make sure that it's safe for your baby to eat solid foods. When you introduce your baby to solid foods, the best foods to try first are:

- Baby cereal mixed with a few teaspoons of breast milk
- Pureed fruits and veggies

If your baby seems to not want to eat solid foods, don't give up yet. It may take some time for him or her to get used to eating solid foods.

Here are some other tips for you when you start to feed your baby solid foods:

- Notice signs that your baby is giving to know when he or she is done eating. Some signs include:
 - Playing with food or eating utensils.
 - Turns head away from spoon.
 - Leans back in the high chair and tries to move away from the spoon.
- Keep feeding your baby breast milk or formula. Babies still need to have milk until they're at least a year old.
- Your baby should be eating solid foods once a day, but after six months, you might have to increase it to two times a day. Then, after 8-9 months, you'll need to increase the food intake to three times a day. Check with your doctor to make sure your baby is getting the right eating schedule for him or her, though.
- Use a plastic spoon to protect your baby's gums when he or she is eating. Plastic bowls are also helpful. Other feeding equipment you may need include a bib, splat mat, and sippy cups.
- Learn how to make your own baby food so you know what goes into your child's food. Also, making your own baby food helps save money. You can invest in a special baby food blender and use ice cube trays to make proper food portions for your baby.

The number one fact you should remember about weaning is that it's a process; it's not a one-time, overnight event that'll happen magically. Your baby is used to being breastfed, so weaning him or her off breastfeeding gradually is the ideal method.

Planning Your Next Breastfeeding Journey

If you plan to have more children after your first one, the breastfeeding experience you've gained with your first child is essential for planning the next nursing journey. Now that you have experience with breastfeeding, you'll have gained knowledge and developed a keen nursing instinct. But that doesn't mean you don't have to prepare for the next breastfeeding expedition. It's always good to have a plan in place so that you know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Learn how you can plan your next breastfeeding journey with the following tips:

1. Review the ways to increase breast milk supply. Low milk supply is a possible condition you'll come across, so review the tips from Chapter 2 to help you increase your breast milk. You should also take the time to review the information in this e-book so you're well-prepared for the next breastfeeding session.

2. Take prenatal supplements. If you're not getting all the essential nutrients your body needs, prenatal supplements can be a healthy diet saver. Prenatal vitamins can be a big help and provide your growing baby with nutrients he or she needs for growth and

development. [Mother's Select Prenatal & Postnatal Multi + DHA](#) is a great supplement to add to your diet.

3. Create a new breastfeeding schedule. Depending on how much your life has changed from the first child to the second one, you'll need to adjust your breastfeeding schedule from the first time to fit your lifestyle now.

4. Reach out to the mommy community. If you need support during your pregnancy or when you're breastfeeding, refer to online or offline communities specifically for moms. You may need support from experienced moms who have more than one child rather than from new moms. You're going to be a mom to another child now, so you most likely need advice that you didn't get when you were a new mommy yourself.

5. Get back in shape. Before you get pregnant again or even during your pregnancy, get your diet and exercise plans in order. Whether you've slipped on your healthy eating and active lifestyle or have continued them after your first child, it's still a good idea to review your diet and eating plans for post-birth. Also, if you want to get into shape before your baby arrives and get into the habit of eating healthy, writing out your plans and following them for at least a few weeks will benefit you. You can also jumpstart your breastfeeding by including milk-producing foods to your diet.

Remember that your next child may not be the same as your first one, so keep an open mind and learn how your future children will react to breastfeeding and adjust accordingly.

E-book Wrap-Up

Phew! Congratulations, you've made it to the end of the e-book! A truckload of information has been thrown at you about breastfeeding and much more, so take your time to sift through the e-book. Whether you've already given birth or you're pregnant, this e-book can help you through difficulties you're going through or questioning about. Here's a brief review of what we've gone over in this e-book:

- The basics of breastfeeding and what you need to know if you're considering it or starting out;
- Myths and benefits of breastfeeding;
- How to combat common problems of breastfeeding, especially low milk supply;
- How to be a better mother overall with tips for topics such as taking care of yourself, dealing with stress and Mommy Guilt, and staying positive in motherhood;
- Breast pumping basics and other tools you can use when you're nursing;
- How to take care of your breasts and plan your next breastfeeding.

Although this e-book covers a wide variety of topics related to motherhood, we wanted to put emphasis on how you can increase your breast milk supply. We also wanted to focus on how you can be a better you because we understand that being a mom is an

exhausting – yet rewarding – role that you can ever play in life. A healthy you means a healthy baby, so that's why we at Mother's Select offer great mommy-friendly supplements for purposes such as maintaining your health and enhancing your breast milk production. Again, here are the products that we offer:

Mother's Select Store

We're on your side, and we want the best for you and your baby, too. Made with natural ingredients and manufactured in the U.S., our supplements are created with you and your precious little one in mind. Along with our supplements, keep this e-book in your digital library so you'll always have a go-to resource for a healthier, happier, and pro-breastfeeding you.

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