

BABY'S SENSITIVITY to MOTHER'S DIET

Many mothers who breastfeed worry that their baby is fussy because of something they have eaten. Some mothers may even have been told that their baby is allergic to their milk. Most mothers who breastfeed do not need to change their diets, but sometimes a baby can be bothered by a food their mother eats. They are not allergic to their mother's milk, but they may react to something in the milk from their mother's diet.

Here are some signs that your baby may be sensitive to a food that you have eaten:

- Fussiness
- Rash on face or body
- Bright red cheeks
- Spits up frequently
- Constant runny nose or cough
- Hard stools
- Blood or mucus in stools
- Green stools (after the first week)

Signs of food sensitivity can show up any time up to 24 hours after a feeding.

Many healthy babies will have a couple of signs from this list, but most babies with food problems will have several of these signs, not just one or two.

The most common foods that cause reactions are dairy and soy products. Other foods that may cause a problem are eggs, nuts, shellfish and wheat. If a baby is sensitive to dairy products in mother's milk this is not the same as lactose intolerance, which is very rare in babies and young children. The reaction is to the protein in cow's milk that gets into your milk when you consume it.

If you think that your baby might have problems with food you eat, see the lactation consultant at your hospital. The lactation consultant may have you bring a list of all the foods and drinks that you have consumed over a few days.

If you believe a specific food is a problem, then stop eating that food or anything that is made with that particular food. It will take a week or two for cow's milk protein to leave your body and your baby's body. Watch your baby to see if the symptoms get better after you stop eating the food for a few days. Then add the food back in and see if your baby has problems again. If your baby's doctor has told you that your baby has a food allergy, ask the baby's doctor before you eat that food again.

It can be difficult if you think that your baby is having problems with food you eat. A lactation consultant and your baby's doctor will help you find out what you can do to help your baby.

Call your baby's doctor right away if your baby has any of these signs:

- Wheezing or trouble breathing
- Constant crying
- Not gaining or losing weight
- Has a bad rash that doesn't go away
- Always has a runny nose or cough
- Vomits frequently
- Has blood in stool