



# BREASTFEEDING FOOD GUIDE

## FOR MUMS

**T O A V O I D C O L I C**

Having a baby who cries a lot and who seems to have an upset stomach can be very distressing for you and for your baby. It's important to try different things to help improve the situation.

When your baby is happier, calmer and not in pain, you will be too. You are so intimately connected with them and so it's no surprise how distressing this situation can be.

*With a little preparation, you can minimise the chances your baby will have an upset stomach by following the guidelines in this article.*



# STEP 1: " FEED THE MOTHER TO FEED THE CHILD "

This is one of the leading tenets when understanding Chinese medicine and it has very literal significance in the world of breastfeeding.

There are some basic rules to keep your diet healthy in the postnatal period. The underlying approach is to keep all foods gentle, warming and very nourishing. Good choices are slow-cooked foods such as soups and stews; avoid too much raw food and anything cold – straight out of the fridge or freezer. Anything that is too hard to digest can be damaging to your vulnerable and "open" body. Also, the baby's digestive system is considered to be very underdeveloped and needs to be treated delicately to enable the baby to create a strong gut for life.

Add herbs such as ginger and cinnamon to your food as they are considered warming herbs and will ensure your breastmilk is also "warm" and easier to digest.

The digestive system in Chinese medicine is referred to as the Spleen and Stomach system. It is responsible for digesting the food we eat, turning our food into energy and absorbing vitamins and minerals so our bodies can thrive. Understandably, if our digestive system is weak, it impedes our general health and body functions.

Newborn babies have just come out of an environment where they've had all their nutritional needs met directly from you, not having to do any

digestive work directly. Once they come out into the world, they can no longer rely on you for feeding them so directly. We say in TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) that the digestive system is developing for the first six years of a child's life. Therefore, what we do in those first six years can contribute to building a strong foundation for a healthy, adaptable and thriving little one. Much of their health throughout their whole life is determined by those first few months of feeding.

A study found that when mothers cut some of the major known food allergens out of their diet (cow's milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy and fish), 74 per cent of the babies improved within one week (improvement equaled at least a 25 per cent decrease in crying) which meant three hours less crying or more over a 48-hour period. (The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Volume 96, Issue 6, Pages 886-892, December 1995 - <http://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749%2895%2970224-5/abstract>)

So what should you avoid and what should you eat?

In the six weeks leading up to birth, we advise that you avoid the following foods and continue to do so for the first two to three months of your baby's life. From three months on, we recommend introducing the foods you haven't eaten – slowly, one at a time. The foods in the "avoid" category often cause tummy upsets for adults and are harder to digest, so it's not hard to imagine that they could cause an issue for a newborn.



# BREASTFEEDING ANTI-COLIC DIET

## FOODS TO BE AVOIDED

*For six weeks prior to baby's birth and for the first two to three months after birth*

- Berries
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Capsicums
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Fish, Eggs and Dairy (these can be okay, it depends on your baby)
  - Garlic
  - Grapes
  - Lemon juice
  - Lentils
  - Lettuce
  - Mangoes
  - Melons
  - Oranges
  - Peas
  - Pineapple
  - Powdered yeast
  - Radish
  - Raw onion
- Stimulants: tea, coffee, chocolate and alcohol
  - Stone fruit
  - Strawberries
- Strong herbs and spices
- Sugar and gluten (avoiding these will also minimise inflammation of your own gut in the lead-up to birth according to Dr Gowri Motha, OB and author of The Gentle Birth Method).
  - Tomato
  - Turnip

## FOODS TO BE EATEN

*For six weeks prior to baby's birth and for the first two to three months after birth*

- Apples, custard apples
- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Bananas
- Beetroot
- Carrot
- Celery
- Corn
- Eggplant
- Grains: gluten-free
  - Meat
- Mushrooms
  - Papaya
- Pears
- Pumpkin
- Root vegetables
- Soups & Stews: Use organic free-range (where possible) animal bones, (chicken, beef, pork) to make a broth. Adding 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar will help bring calcium and other minerals out of the bones for your consumption.
  - Sprouts
- Teas: Chamomile, Dandelion, Fennel and Cardamom
  - Zucchini



# RECIPES

## COLIC RECIPE FOR BABY

*(We've used this with countless clients  
and it always makes a difference)*

12 dill seeds  
(can be hard to find, just use fennel if it's too hard)  
12 fennel seeds

- 1 Steep in 6 teaspoons of boiling water for 15 minutes.
- 2 Strain and give ½ teaspoon before every feed.
- 3 Make fresh daily.



## WARMING BEEF STEW

*Can be cooked in the oven, a slow cooker  
or a crock pot on the stove.*

### Serves 4-6

1-1.5kg of Osso Bucco (organic where possible) - the marrow is great for her kidneys  
2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar (this helps calcium and other minerals come out of the bones)  
2 onions, chopped  
4 garlic cloves, crushed  
2 carrots, chopped  
500g baby mushrooms  
4 sprigs of rosemary (leave this out if it's too pungent for your toddler)  
1 Tbsp Italian parsley  
A few splashes of red wine (the alcohol is burnt off during cooking)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
10 cups cold water

1 Brown off the onion, followed by the meat, then the mushrooms. Once they all have some colour, add the carrots and cook for two minutes, stirring regularly. Add the wine, cold water and apple cider vinegar to the pot, scraping away any brown delicious morsels from the sides and bottom of the pot and keeping them in the mixture.

2 Pull the leaves off two of the sprigs of rosemary and you can leave the other two whole - it's up to you. Cover and bake on 180 degrees celcius for 1.5-2 hours, or until the meat falls off the bone. Alternatively, cover the pot, bring to the boil then put on a very low simmer for 1.5 to 2 hours.

3 Serve with the fresh parsley and have with brown rice or mashed potato.



# STEP 2:

## BREASTFEEDING ON DEMAND VERSUS A SCHEDULE

If there is no problem with colic, or any other symptoms such as earache, cough, swollen glands, asthma or eczema (these are related to poor digestion in Chinese medicine), then we suggest that breastfeeding on demand is appropriate.

However, if there are problems, then a different strategy is worth trying. According to Chinese medical theory, the Spleen and Stomach need time to take in the food slowly, time to digest it and time for the digestive organs to be clear of the food. If there is a lot of snacking, this can impede digestion in a bub who has issues with colic. You even know this yourself... if you don't have proper meals but heaps of snacks instead, it can certainly cause havoc and gas in your gastrointestinal tract.

You need to be careful that your bub isn't starving when giving a feed either as there is a tendency to gulp down the milk as well as many air bubbles, and these bubbles in their little systems can cause gas and

pain. By slowing down feeds and making them more frequent or on a schedule instead of an "on demand" system, the baby's digestive system isn't overwhelmed and they can digest what's there more comfortably. If they are on a schedule, it doesn't need to be super strict to work, it simply needs to give enough time for their system to digest the breastmilk properly and clear it out.

You are the best judge to figure out what is going to work best for your baby.

As well as dietary considerations, there are also effective baby massage techniques, acupressure for baby and acupuncture for mum.

In a recent study, it was found that giving mum acupuncture helped improved her baby's colic, which goes to show that the Chinese medical theory of "the mother feeds the child" is not just a nice philosophy, nor simply an emotional one, but one that has physiological relevance.

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*INFANTILE COLIC: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF MATERNAL ACUPUNCTURE YUSUF OZGUR CAKMAK Published in British Medical Journal Online, First 28 October 2011 <http://aim.bmj.com/content/early/2011/10/28/acupmed.2011.010065>.*



# STEP 3:

## A D V I C E   A F T E R   A N T I B I O T I C S

Antibiotics are considered to be very cold energetically and are said to damage the Spleen, hence can contribute to your baby's upset digestive system.

If you have been given antibiotics, for example: after a diagnosis of strepB in late pregnancy, or if your waters broke early, we recommend giving probiotics to both yourself and your baby to help repair the gut flora and assist healthy gut function.

For your baby, we suggest a good-quality baby probiotic such as Babybiotics by Bioceuticals. You can buy this from some local pharmacies, health food stores and from Red Tent Mums. To get it into your baby, wet the nipple with milk and rub the baby probiotic powder around your nipple. This way, the probiotic gets sucked in with the feed. This usually needs to be done only once or twice daily.

If your baby is still suffering, further treatment is needed. We would recommend getting your baby's situation assessed by your doctor as well as considering acupuncture and Chinese herbal treatment.

Want to learn more about the importance of good bacteria? Watch this documentary film: Microbirth. It's filled with up-to-date information on the topic as it was released in September 2014. Check it out here: <http://microbirth.com/>

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*Rebecca Mar Young & Naomi Abeshouse*

**Rebecca** and **Naomi** are known as the **Red Tent Mums** and they run the **Red Tent Health Centre** in Sydney's Bondi Beach. They're passionate about improving women and children's health and about educating parents. So much of a difference can be made in a child's life if health problems are caught early on. Both Rebecca and Naomi hold a BA Health Science in Traditional Chinese Medicine and both have post-graduate paediatric studies under their belt. They have treated children since 2006 and 2004 respectively and over the course of that time have seen countless results including boosting immunity, strengthening gut health, reducing incidence of infection and clearing skin conditions.

**Visit**

[www.RedTent.com.au](http://www.RedTent.com.au)

**or call if you have questions about your child:**

**1800 RED TENT (1800 733 836).**

**They also regularly run courses for parents on naturally benefiting children's health. See these links for details:**

<http://redtent.com.au/news-events/>

and

<http://redtent.com.au/news-events/kids-health-course-hsp/>

