

Breastfeeding May Reduce Diabetes Risk By Half: 4 Foods That Help Increase Breast Milk

According to a latest study, women who breastfeed their babies for six months or more may stave off the risk of developing diabetes in future by a whopping 47 percent.

Food | NDTV Food Desk | Updated: January 17, 2018 12:17 IST



Image credit: istockphoto.com/FamVeld

New mothers take note. Women who breastfeed their babies for six months or more may stave off the risk of developing diabetes in future by a whopping 47 percent says a new study.

For the study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Internal Medicine, researchers examined the data from a three-decade US study of more than 1,200 white and African-American women.

Scientists found a very strong association between breastfeeding duration and lowered risk of developing diabetes, even after accounting for all possible confounding risk factors. Researchers noted that there was a remarkable 47% reduction in their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, when compared to those who did not breastfeed at all. For women who breastfed for six months or less, there was a 25% reduction in diabetes risk, noted the researchers.

Breastfeeding may induce protective effects via hormones that act in the pancreas, controlling blood insulin levels and blood sugar. The researchers noted that as the duration of breastfeeding increased the incidence of diabetes decreased in a graded manner regardless of race, gestational diabetes, lifestyle behaviours, body size, and other metabolic risk factors measured before pregnancy.

Breastfeeding has other long-term benefits for mothers too. Several studies have previously pointed that it may lower a risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends babies to be exclusively fed on breast milk from as early as an hour after birth to six months of age to achieve optimal growth, cognitive development and health.

Did you know that you could increase the production of breast milk naturally by taking some food and herbs. Herbs which promote milk flow in mothers are also known as galactogogues and are a boon for those who are unable to produce enough milk.

Ms. Anju Majeed, Director and Senior Scientist at Sami Labs, suggests some of most prominent spices or galactogogues that can come handy.

- 1. Fenugreek or Methi Seeds:** Fenugreek is one of the oldest medicinal herbs. Methi seeds contain a compound called phytoestrogens that help in boosting the function of the mammary glands. Methi seeds should be soaked overnight, boiled and strained and had every morning to increase milk supply.
- 2. Cinnamon:** Cinnamon helps to increase the flow of mother's milk. It will also help in delaying periods after childbirth. A pinch of cinnamon should be added to half a teaspoon of honey or to a glass of warm milk and consumed.
- 3. Cumin:** An integral part of Indian cuisine, cumin is a great remedy for stimulating milk production. These seeds are packed with iron, which is an essential mineral for nursing mothers. Cumin seeds also aid in digestion, stimulate bowel movements and provide relief against gastric problems. Cumin powder should be consumed with warm milk at bed time for best results.
- 4. Ginger:** It is good to consume ginger during the lactation period. You cut few strips of fresh ginger root and boil it in water. Let it steep for two-three minutes and then strain and drink.