

WOMEN CAN SAFELY FAST ON YOM KIPPUR

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Women are concerned about not having enough milk for their babies on Yom Kippur, but in the majority of cases, healthy women will produce more than enough milk for their babies. (Unless a woman has an eating disorder or major medical condition). Why? Because breast milk is made from your blood. The Gemora states, "That Hashem makes a chessed and turns the breast milk from red to white so women are not repulsed by breastfeeding their babies." Even modern scientific research backs this statement. Our blood is replenishing itself every day and every hour.

When a woman is pregnant her body begins storing nutrients throughout the pregnancy for the future production of breast milk. The milk your baby receives is from nutrients that have been stored in your body weeks before. Those calories you have eaten weeks ago are the fuel to make breast milk production. It's not what you eat for breakfast becomes your babies' lunch. What science has found is that even if a woman stops consuming dairy products, we can still find whey protein for up to six weeks after she has stopped ingesting milk products. Below are quotes from clinical research.

- A meta-analysis examining research from around the globe found that only when famine or near-famine conditions last for many weeks does a formerly well-nourished mother's milk production or milk quality starts to suffer (Prentice, Goldberg, & Prentice 1994).
- Breastfeeding research tells us that *short-term* fasting will not decrease milk supply, but that severe dehydration (over many days) can begin to decrease milk supply.
- Mature breast milk is perfectly designed and contains water, fat, carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and minerals, and amino acids. It also contains white blood cells, antibodies, enzymes that is taken from stores in the woman's body. If a woman fasts, the body will 'borrow' the nutrients needed from her personal fat stores and muscle tissue.
- A mother's current diet is only one source of the energy and nutrients she needs to make breastmilk. Energy (calories) and most of the nutrients in breastmilk are also drawn from the stores laid down in the body during pregnancy, and every time you eat.
- Yes, it is safe to fast while breastfeeding. Your body will produce enough milk to satiate your baby. This happens because your body tunes to the new way of burning calories to produce milk. Your body is capable of producing milk for your baby even if you do not eat anything for 24 hours.

Tips for easy fasting:

1. Eat a high protein diet days before the fast.
2. Hydrate with fruits (not just water) like smoothies.
3. Eat as many greens as you can.
4. Vegetable soups are also suggested with as many-colored vegetables as possible (a rainbow soup- onions-red, yellow and white. Also carrots, broccoli, squash, cauliflower, green beans, and beets).
5. If you suffer from a medical condition please consult your Doctor and Rav.