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Breastfeeding Elimination Diet

This diet was developed by William G. Crook, M.D. (*Detecting Your Hidden Allergies*, Jackson, Tenn: Professional Books, 1987), and it has several variations, depending on how bothersome the symptoms are. The elimination diet we use is based on eating the least allergenic food in each of the food groups. You may need to do this for two weeks since it can take this long for the offending foods to get out of both your systems. Here is the variation we find helps mothers get the quickest, surest relief for their hurting babies:

- Eat only range-fed turkey and lamb, baked or boiled potatoes and sweet potatoes (with salt and pepper only), rice and millet as your only grain, cooked green and yellow squash for your vegetable, and for fruit, pears and diluted pear juice. Drink a rice-based beverage drink in place of milk on cereal or in cooking. Do not yet use soy beverage. Take a calcium supplement. (Rice products, such as rice beverage, rice-based frozen dessert, rice pasta, rice flour, and millet are available in nutrition stores.)
- At the end of two weeks, or sooner if the colic subsides, gradually add other foods to your diet, one every four days, starting with those less commonly allergenic (such as sunflower seeds, carrots, beets, salmon, oats, grapes, California avocado, peaches). Wait a while before you add wheat, beef, eggs, nuts, and corn. Avoid for the longest time dairy products, soy products, peanuts, shellfish, coffee, tea, colas and other beverages containing caffeine, chocolate, gas-producing vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, onions, green peppers), tomatoes, and citrus fruits. Vegetables and fruits are often tolerated in cooked form sooner than in raw form.
- Keep a record of the foods you eat and the problem behaviors; try to correlate baby's fussy spells with what you've eaten in the past day or so. This gives you a clearer perspective and helps you stay objective, which is hard to do when you are sleep-deprived. This is especially important when baby has stayed fussy past four months of age.
- **Do not starve yourself.** It may feel, the first day or two, as though there is not enough for you to eat; but you can still eat a nutritious diet. You just have to eat more of the "safe" types of food until you determine what your baby can tolerate. Colicky babies usually respond to mother's diet changes dramatically and quickly, often within one or two days. With the older baby who is nightwaking, you may have to wait longer to see results. Typically, mothers will find that when they change their diet baby may sleep better for a few nights only to start waking again a lot for a few days or a week or so, at which time the sleep again improves. It's important to know this so that you will not be tempted to give up when you think "it's not working." Older babies are often less sensitive to fruits and vegetables in mom's diet (and their own), so at this stage we recommend mainly *protein elimination*, namely dairy, beef, eggs, chicken, shellfish, soy, corn, wheat, and peanuts (plus any other foods you have learned bother baby). Research has shown that some foreign proteins get into some mothers' milk more than others', and of course some babies are more sensitive to these proteins than other babies.

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