Fact or Myth? From One Latina Mom to Another

Let's face it, being pregnant can be hard, having a baby is without a doubt hard, and taking care of a newborn might be even harder, especially if it's your first. Even when it feels like you are doing a great job, there is always someone who can't stop suggesting ways to make things better.

Think about it, I am sure you have heard…

"If you do this _____, your baby will sleep through the night."

"I had 4 kids and that has never happened to me…"

"You need to stop drinking coffee if you want to breastfeed."

"You should consider changing your diet, it might help you lose some of the baby weight."

Sound familiar? That someone can be your parents, siblings, partner, the in-laws, grandparents, extended family members, or some random person/influencer online. With no shame, those are probably good ideas that may have worked for them whenever you had their own kids but it might not be the same for you and that is okay. Every experience is different, and no kid is the same.

When I was pregnant, I felt so great! I was on top of the world (ignoring the weight gain, and the shortness of breath). Really, no joke. Receiving compliments everywhere I went felt awesome!

But now that I have my baby… it sometimes feels like everyone wants me to do more and do "better". Culture and ethnicity play a huge part in how we approach parenthood but let me tell you… being a Latina woman holds no exception.

So, let's talk about some myths among the Latino community.

#1, Adding a little bit of cereal to the baby's bottle will help him/her sleep better, especially at night.

Fact or Myth?

This is true or a fact but not necessarily for a healthy standpoint. You may notice your baby sleeping for longer periods

of time but it's because they are being overfed and it will require more effort from the digestive system to break down this heavy meal. Think about that time when you ate way more than what you were used to. You might have felt tired and opted for a nap; the same thing happens to your baby. Remember that babies need to eat every 2-3 hrs., and sometimes earlier if you are exclusively breastfeeding (since breastmilk is easier to digest, compared to formula).

So, next time you hear this, please, do not add any cereal to your baby's bottle unless your pediatrician instructs you to do so. You can read more about "Boosting your Breastmilk" here: https://mothertobaby.org/baby-blog/boosting-milk-for-baby-the-supply-demands-of-breastfeeding/.

#2 You should start a liquid diet once you have your baby to produce more breastmilk and lose the weight gained.

Fact or Myth?

Myth! You have spent 9 months "eating for two" and now they want you to stop eating and go on a liquid diet! This is not only a myth, but it could also be harmful to you, especially if breastfeeding is a goal of yours. To successfully produce enough breastmilk to feed your baby, your body needs to be well nourished. The goal is to be hydrated and eat a variety of foods from each food group [carbohydrates, proteins (vegetable or animal sources), vegetables, fruits, and dairy] and to nurse your baby as often as they want/need (on demand). So please, drink lots of water but also eat solid foods, unless your healthcare provider instructs you to do something else.

PS: If you want to know more about nutrition, talk to a registered dietitian. They will work with you to help achieve your goals. Read more about other blogs on nutrition at: https://mothertobaby.org/category/food-beverages/.

#3 Eating eggs after delivery will make your breastmilk smell bad and your baby won't latch.

Fact or Myth?

Yet, another myth! All foods have different mechanisms of digestion, and although some take longer to digest, it is a myth that some residues will affect the smell of your breastmilk. Same as above, if you are a fan of eggs and you have been eating them throughout the pregnancy, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that you should stop eating them after delivery. On the contrary, studies show that the earlier we expose our babies to the Big 8 food allergens (milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans; with sesame being the 9th added), the better likelihood there is that this may reduce their chances of having a food allergy later in life. So once again, it is safe to say you can continue drinking your water and eating your meals, bearing in mind the importance of practicing ***food safety*** [eating fully cooked foods, with an internal temperature of 160°F, for the eggs] Learn more about food safety here: https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/eating-raw-undercooked-or-cold-meats-and-seafood/,

#4 Drinking coffee while breastfeeding will make your baby fussy.

Fact or Myth?

This is a fact but when the intake of caffeine surpasses 300mg a day. Remember that being fussy is not a diagnosis, it is a symptom of some underlying problem. Fussiness and gassiness are very common in babies since they are not moving. If you are breastfeeding and your baby is getting fussy very often, contact your healthcare provider. But rest assured that one cup of brewed coffee a day will not make your baby fussy as it is typically around 137 mg of caffeine. More often than not, there are other reasons why your baby might be fussy such as: excessive sugar intake, complex carbohydrates intake (which are harder to break down in your digestive system), among many other reasons. To learn more about caffeine intake during the pregnancy or while breastfeeding, check out our Fact Sheet at: https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/caffeine-pregnancy/ .

Now that we have talked about some myths among our community, I hope we can spread the word and you may feel more empowered to make your own decisions based on what we have discussed today.

Being a Latina mom living in the United States has given me a different perspective but no matter where I am, I have heard these myths about motherhood more often than I would like to admit. Hopefully debunking and explaining some of these myths will help you and others understand that at the end of the day, you are more than capable of making good choices and you know what works best for you and your baby.

Take care of yourself so you can take care of that little person you just had. At MotherToBaby we are here to help you, just one call, text, chat, or email away.

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