
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Food for new mums



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Georgie

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Georgie.

Beth

And I'm Beth. Leaving home, getting married, and a parent dying are three of the most important experiences in many people's lives. But perhaps the most defining moment in some women's' lives is 'the miracle of birth', in other words, having a baby.

Georgie

Throughout pregnancy a lot of care and attention is given to expecting mums. But as soon as the baby is born, this attention moves to the new-born baby, making sure they are healthy, warm and safe.

Beth

We talk a lot about baby nutrition, but what the mother eats can be just as important, especially the first meal after the intense effort of giving birth, whether it's chicken soup, a glass of champagne, or a good old cuppa tea. In this programme, we're talking about what women eat and drink in the first few weeks after having a baby. And, as usual, we'll be learning some useful new vocabulary as well.

Georgie

But first I have a question for you, Beth. A typical pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks, but when does an unborn baby's stomach start to grow in the mother's womb? Is it:

- a) at 3 weeks?
- b) at 5 weeks? or,
- c) at 8 weeks?

Beth

I'll say the baby's tummy starts to grow at about five weeks.

Georgie

OK, Beth, we'll find out if that's the correct answer later in the programme. Giving birth is not called 'labour' for nothing – it's hard work, leaving the new mum physically and emotionally exhausted, and in need of food that's nourishing, for both herself and her baby. Here's Allison Oman Lawi, deputy director of nutrition to the United Nations World Food Programme, explaining more to BBC World Service programme, The Food Chain:

Allison Oman Lawi

A woman who is **breastfeeding** and during that **postpartum** time, the first six months, she could need up to 650 additional calories a day which actually is quite a bit more than she even needed in addition during pregnancy.

Beth

Alison says that women need to eat even more calories **postpartum**, meaning after childbirth, than they do during pregnancy. That's especially true for mothers who are **breastfeeding**, feeding their baby directly with milk from her breasts.

Georgie

How new mums get those extra calories changes from place to place, and different cultures have developed their own traditions about what foods are best. For Chinese-American mum, Heng Ou, roast pig trotters were one of the best things to eat after childbirth because they contain a lot of collagen which helps produce breast milk.

Beth

And when Ruma, who's Punjabi family originally comes from India, gave birth to a baby boy, her mother cooked *panjeeri*, a kind of spicy nut mix with cashews,

almonds and melon seeds to promote breast milk and help the healing process. Listen now as Ruma explains how important her mother's help was, to BBC World Service programme, The Food Chain:

Ruma

So, the first 10 days were amazing. My mum came to stay and **gosh!** it was so important because I had a C-section so I was on very strong painkillers, I was **in a daze** anyway, and to be honest because she was here I was fed, you know, so she would look after me while I would look after baby. And my husband was very **hands-on** as well, so that first ten days whilst it was really hard, I didn't **fall apart** which I might have done if I'd been by myself.

Georgie

When Ruma talks about her mother's help, she uses the word, **gosh!**, an exclamation used to show a feeling of wonder or surprise. Ruma also says she was **in a daze** because of medicine she was taking for pain. If someone is **in a daze**, they feel confused and cannot think clearly, maybe because of a shock or surprise.

Beth

Luckily, Ruma had help from her mum, and also her husband who was very **hands-on**, meaning that he was closely involved in organizing things and making decisions, and didn't leave it up to someone else.

Georgie

Along with her mother's healthy home cooking, the help Ruma got from her family meant she didn't **fall apart**, a phrase which means become so emotionally disturbed that you're unable to think or act calmly, or to deal with the situation you're in.

Beth

New mums have to be expert jugglers, balancing a new baby and recovering from childbirth, with getting too little sleep. No wonder they need hot healthy food to eat! Right, isn't it time you revealed the answer to your question, Georgie?

Georgie

Sure. I asked you when an unborn baby's stomach starts to grow. You guessed it was at five weeks, which was... the correct answer, Beth! At about 5 weeks, the cells forming a baby's stomach, lungs, bone and brain all start to divide and grow. Right, let's recap the vocabulary we've learned in this programme starting with **postpartum** meaning following childbirth.

Beth

Breastfeeding is feeding a baby directly with milk from the mother's breasts.

Georgie

The exclamation **gosh!** is used to express a feeling of surprise or wonder.

Beth

If you're **in a daze**, you feel confused and unable to think clearly, often because of a shock or surprise.

Georgie

If someone is **hands-on**, they're closely involved in organizing things and making decisions, rather than just talking about it or getting someone else to do it.

Beth

And finally, the phrasal verb **fall apart** means to become seriously emotionally disturbed so that you are unable to think calmly or to deal with the difficult situation you are in. Once again our six minutes are up! Join us again soon for more trending topics and useful vocabulary, here at 6 Minute English. Goodbye for now!

Georgie

Bye!

VOCABULARY

breastfeeding

feeding a baby directly with milk from the mother's breasts

postpartum

after giving birth; following childbirth

gosh!

exclamation used to express a feeling of surprise or wonder

in a daze

feeling confused and unable to think clearly, often because of a shock or surprise

hands-on

closely involved in organizing things and making decisions, rather than just talking about it or getting someone else to do it

fall apart

become seriously emotionally disturbed so that you are unable to think calmly or to deal with the difficult situation you are in