

Maintaining Your Milk Supply

Establishing a Good Milk Supply

The first few weeks are important in building a future milk supply for your baby. Try these tips for a good start:

- Breastfeed within the 1st hour or after delivery if possible.
- “Room in” with your baby. Request that your baby not be given formula or water unless medically necessary.
- Breastfeed often in the first 4-6 weeks – every 1 ½ - 3 hours.
- Practice skin-to-skin contact often to encourage breastfeeding.
- Avoid pacifiers the 1st month.
- Ask your health care provider or WIC clinic for a phone number for support.

Breastfeeding is a normal and natural process. Trust your body to make the right amount of milk your baby’s needs. Every time you breastfeed it’s like your baby is asking your body to make more milk. Using artificial baby milk (formula) can lower your milk supply because your baby isn’t asking your body to make more milk for him.

How Do I Know If I’m Making Enough Milk?

Here are some signs that baby is getting enough:

- Baby is alert and active.
- You can hear or see baby swallow.
- Breastfeeds at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Returns to birth weight after about one week.
- Gains about 4-8 ounces a week after the first week.
- Has plenty of wet and dirty diapers for age (see chart below).

Baby’s Age	Wet Diapers	Dirty Diapers*
1 Day	*	*
2 Days	**	**
3 Days	***	**
4 Days	****	***
5 Days	*****	***
6 Days	*****	****
7 Days	*****	****

*A dirty diaper is a stain the size of baby’s fist or at least one teaspoon of solid material.

When should I call my health care provider?

If your baby:

- Has a dry mouth.
- Has red-colored urine.
- Has yellow skin (jaundice).

- Does not have enough wet or dirty diapers (see chart above).
- Will not wake up to eat at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Is showing any signs that he isn't getting enough or you have any concerns.

Things That Might Reduce Your Milk Supply

There are a few things that might interfere with your milk supply. These things are especially important in the first month.

- Avoid using pacifiers. This may cause nipple confusion and reduce baby's instinct to suckle at the breast.
- Try to avoid giving formula after breastfeeding. Breastfed babies will often take a bottle after they nurse because they have strong suckling reflexes. This does not always mean they are still hungry.

I feel like I'm making less milk now. What can I do to increase it?

As baby grows, your body will need to make more milk. Following your baby's hunger cues will help you keep up with your baby's needs. Try these tips to increase your milk supply:

- Nurse baby more often. At least 8-12 times every 24 hours in the first few months. As baby grows he will not need to eat as often, especially when he begins to eat solid foods. But you still need to nurse at least 7 times in 24 hours to keep making milk.
- Nurse the baby as often and as long as he needs. If your baby is growing well, he is getting enough from breastfeeding.
- Use both breasts at each feeding.
- Avoid extra formula or water that your baby doesn't need.
- Pump or hand express your breast milk when you're away from baby. Don't let your breasts get too full.
- Be patient during growth spurts.

Growth spurts are a time when your baby is growing quickly and needs more breast milk. He may be fussy and acts like he wants to eat constantly - this is normal. This is nature's way of helping you make more milk for your growing baby. When this happens, nurse baby more often (even up to every hour or less if he needs) for a few days. Your breast milk supply will increase to meet your baby's needs and you will likely be able to go back to a more typical feeding routine. Giving formula cause your body to make less milk.

WIC can provide you with a lot of information about your family's nutrition and health, but we don't have all the answers. We encourage you to talk to your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns about the health and safety of your family members.