

Making Enough Milk for Your Baby

Colostrum

Colostrum, the first milk, is the only food your baby needs. Colostrum protects your baby from illness, helps baby to start bowel movements and satisfies your baby's hunger and thirst. Two to five days after birth, mothers notice that they have more milk. Over time, your breasts will make more milk and less colostrum.

Making milk is easy when you know how and when to breastfeed

The more your baby breastfeeds and removes milk from the breast, the more breastmilk you will make. How much milk you make depends on these things:

- how well your baby is removing milk,
- how often your baby is breastfeeding, and
- how long your baby breastfeeds at each feeding.

Newborns are hungry often because their stomachs are small. **Newborns need to breastfeed often, every 1½ to 3 hours, or 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.** Let your baby finish feeding on the first breast, then offer the second. Your baby will let you know when he is full by coming off the breast or falling asleep. As babies continue to grow, they get more milk at each feeding and are able to breastfeed faster.

Babies enjoy breastfeeding. Every baby is different. Some feed a short time and need coaxing to continue. Some babies cluster feed: they breastfeed several times in two to three hours and then sleep deeply for several hours. Some very sleepy babies don't wake up to eat. In the early weeks, you might have to wake up a sleepy baby to feed him if it has been more than three hours since the last feeding.



How do I know if my baby is getting enough breastmilk?

Watch for these signs in the first few weeks.

- My baby is active and alert.
- My baby is breastfeeding 8 to 12 times each 24 hours.
- I hear or see my baby swallow when she breastfeeds.
- My baby begins to gain weight after day 5, and is back to her birth weight by 10 days of age.
- After the first week, my baby gains 4-8 ounces each week.
- My baby has three or more stools daily after day one, increasing to four or more stools by day five. A stool is a stain the size of your baby's fist, or at least one teaspoon of solid material.
- My baby's stool changes from black to yellow by day five.
- My baby has clear or pale yellow urine and 6 or more soaking wet diapers daily by day five.
- My breasts feel full before feeding and soft after feeding.
- Breastfeeding my baby is comfortable.

Call a breastfeeding specialist or your doctor if you did not check all of the statements above.

Growth spurts

Suddenly your baby is eating all the time! This is called a growth spurt. Breastfeeding more often is your baby's way of building your milk supply to meet his increasing needs. You may notice growth spurts at the following times, but growth spurts can occur any time!

- 3 weeks old
- 3 months old
- 6 weeks old
- 6 months old

Your body will adjust to your baby's needs by making more milk when you breastfeed more often.

Increasing your milk supply

Breastfeeding more often than usual will increase your milk supply. Add two or more extra feedings a day for three to four days. Massaging your breasts before and during feedings or pumping will also help. If you are away from your baby, pumping more often will help to increase your milk supply.