

Increasing Milk Supply For Breastfeeding Mothers



Mothers often worry about their milk supply even when they have enough. We hope this information helps to reassure.

How do I know if I have enough milk?

Your baby usually gets enough breast milk when:

- ✓ You see and hear your baby swallowing (a soft 'ka' sound).
- ✓ Your breasts feel softer after the feed.
- ✓ Your baby feeds 8 or more times in 24 hours.
- ✓ Your baby is usually content between feeds.
- ✓ Your baby has at least 6 really wet diapers and 3 to 4 loonie-sized yellow bowel movements (poop) each day by the time they are 4 or 5 days old. (Older babies may have fewer bowel movements.)
- ✓ Your baby gains weight.

In first 3 to 4 months	About 30 grams a day
From 4 to 6 months	About 15 grams a day
From 6 to 12 months	About 10 grams a day

It is normal for babies to be hungrier than usual for a few days from time to time. It is also normal for babies to feed very often in the evening. We call this 'cluster feeding'.

How can I increase my milk supply?

- Breastfeed often – every 1 ½ to 2 hours during the day.
- Before you feed, place your baby skin-to-skin, massage your breasts, or do relaxation exercises.
- Latch your baby deeply, not just on the nipple (This helps with milk flow, and is for your comfort).
- Gently squeeze the firm areas of your breast while breastfeeding.
- Put your baby skin-to-skin as much as you can.
- Hand express or pump after a feed. This helps your breasts make more milk.

For great directions and videos on hand expressing, go to www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly. Choose 'Hand expression' from the Topic list.



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Still worried about your breast milk supply?

Does breastfeeding hurt?

Sometimes painful breastfeeding is a sign your baby might not be getting as much milk as possible. Talk to your healthcare provider or a breastfeeding expert at your local health unit.

What if I have to be away from my baby?

If you are not feeding your baby at the breast for a period of time, pump at least 8 times in 24 hours to protect your supply. This includes pumping at least one time in the middle of the night.

While pumping:

- Massage and gently squeeze the firm areas of your breast.
- Relax and think about your baby, or look at a picture of your baby.

What else can reduce my milk supply?

Your milk supply can be reduced by:

- skipping feeds
- taking certain medicines (examples: birth control pills, cold or allergy medicine, diuretics)

Are there other remedies I can use?

Many cultures around the world have used foods and herbs to try and increase milk supply. It is not clear from studies done if they work or if they are safe for you and your baby. Remedies such as fenugreek, milk thistle, and blessed thistle are not recommended.

Years ago, beer was used to increase milk supply. We now know alcohol might actually decrease milk flow. Since alcohol passes into breast milk, it is safest to have little or no alcohol.

For more information, go to www.motherisk.org.
Search 'Alcohol'.

What if I still do not have enough milk?

When you have done everything you can and still are not making enough milk, your healthcare providers might suggest you take medication to increase your supply.

Some reasons to use medication can include:

- a decreasing milk supply even with pumping and hand expressing
- when a woman wants to restart breastfeeding after weaning
- when a woman wants to breastfeed an adopted baby

The medication is called 'domperidone'.

About domperidone

Several small studies have been done on this medication. The studies included women who gave birth to premature babies. These studies found that taking domperidone (10mg 3 times a day for 7 to 14 days) can modestly increase the amount of breast milk produced. Most of the studies had women start taking the medication at least 2 weeks after their babies were born. Very few women reported any side effects from this amount of medication over this time period. The most common side effects were headache and stomach upset. When breast milk was checked, only a tiny amount of medication was in it.

Note: Health Canada recommends the dose of domperidone to be no higher than 30mg a day. There are concerns about rare abnormal heart rhythms and sudden death with this medication. A woman is more likely to suffer these rare adverse events when she:

- has an existing abnormal heart rhythm or heart disease
- takes other medications that might also cause abnormal heart rhythms
- has abnormal blood levels of electrolytes (for example: can happen from vomiting or diarrhea)

Ask your healthcare provider if domperidone is right for you.

For more information, contact your local Health Unit

Abbotsford	604 864-3400	Mission	604 814-5500
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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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