

Breast-feeding: Tips to Increase Your Milk Supply

Many mothers wonder if their babies are getting enough to eat. Listed below are some of the signs that mean a breast-fed baby is being well nourished:

1. Your baby nurses 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
2. Your baby acts relaxed and comfortable after eating.
3. Your baby wets at least 6 cloth or 5 disposable diapers and has at least 1 bowel movement in 24 hours. The number of bowel movements may change after the first few weeks.
4. You can hear your baby swallow milk while nursing.
5. Your breasts seem softer after nursing.
6. Your baby gains 4 to 7 ounces a week after the first week. There is no need to weigh your baby at home—your baby's doctor will do this for you.

It is not a good idea to offer a bottle of water or formula after nursing to see if your baby is still hungry. Most babies will suck on a bottle after nursing. This just means they need to suck. It *does not* mean they are still hungry. Babies cry or fuss for many reasons, such as being tired, bored wet, hot, or cold.

Beginning birth control pills too soon can decrease your milk supply. It is best to wait

at least 6 weeks before beginning birth control pills. Then use only the minipill called Progestin. If you still notice a decrease in your milk supply, discuss other birth control options with your doctor.

Smoking can also contribute to a decreased milk supply. If you can't stop smoking:

1. Try to cut down.
2. Smoke after nursing.
3. Don't smoke in the same room with your baby.

If your baby shows signs of needing more nourishment, you can do the following to increase your milk supply:

1. Nurse your baby *every 2 hours* during the day and *every 3 to 4 hours* at night (at least 8 to 12 times in 24 hours).
2. Feed your baby at least 15 minutes at each breast. Allow him to decide if he needs to nurse longer. Do not limit nursing time.
3. Nurse your baby at both breasts at each feeding. If baby falls asleep, wake him to change breasts.
4. Do not supplement your baby's feedings with formula, water, or baby food. Usually, no other foods are neces-

sary for 6 months if you are exclusively breast-feeding.

5. Drink plenty of fluids, so that your urine is very pale in color.
6. Eat high-protein foods.
7. Take your iron supplement if your health care provider says you are anemic.
8. Discuss the need for vitamin and lecithin supplements with your doctor or nurse-midwife.
9. Take a nap whenever your baby sleeps.
10. Do not use nipple shields or pacifiers.

11. Some mothers have reported success with increasing milk production by:

- Drinking 2 nonalcoholic beers per day.
- Taking 10 brewer's yeast tablets per day.
- Taking the herb fenugreek—2 capsules, 3 times per day. (Talk to your doctor first. Fenugreek can lower blood glucose levels in diabetic mothers, can sometimes cause diarrhea in mothers, and can aggravate asthma symptoms in asthmatic mothers.) As a rule, milk production increases within 72 hours after starting fenugreek.