



Information for breastfeeding families

# Increasing Your Milk Supply

During the first few days and weeks, frequent stimulation of the breasts is essential to establish an abundant supply. If you find your milk supply is low, try the following recommendations.

## More breast stimulation

- Breastfeed more often, at least 8 or more times per 24 hours.
- Delay the use of a pacifier.
- Try to get in “one more feeding” before you go to sleep, even if you have to wake the baby.
- Offer both breasts at each feeding.
- Empty your breasts well by massaging while the baby is feeding.
- Assure the baby is completely emptying your breasts at each feeding.

## Use a manual or electric pump

- Use a hospital grade pump with a double kit.
- Pump after feedings or between feedings.
- Apply warmth and massage before beginning to pump.
- Try “power pumping.” Pump for 15 minutes every hour for a day; or try pumping 10 minutes, resting 10 minutes, pumping 10 minutes and soon, for an hour.

## Parent care

- Increase skin-to-skin holding time with your baby; relax together.
- Take a warm, bath, read, meditate, and empty your mind of tasks that need to be done.
- Reduce stress and activity. Get help.
- Eat nutritious meals; continue to take prenatal vitamins.
- Increase fluid intake.
- Back rubs stimulate nerves that serve the breasts (central part of the spine).

## Avoid these things that are known to reduce milk supply

- Smoking
- Birth control pills and injections
- Decongestants, antihistamines
- Severe weight loss diets
- Mints, parsley, sage (excessive amounts)

## Keep records

- It is important to keep a daily log with the 24 hour pumping output totals - this amount is more important than the pumped amount at each session. This will help you see your progress over the days.
- Keep in touch with your lactation specialist or healthcare provider to monitor your progress and modify your care as necessary.

## Retained placenta

- If you are not seeing improvement and you are still having vaginal bleeding after 2 weeks, discuss the possibility of retained placental fragments with your healthcare provider. Small bits of the placenta can secrete enough hormones to prevent the milk from coming in.

## Low thyroid

- Have your healthcare provider check your thyroid levels. Low thyroid can affect milk supply.

## If supplementation is recommended

- Determine the amount needed with your healthcare provider.
- Pump after the feeding.
- Offer the supplement in a way that won't interfere with breastfeeding such as tube or syringe at the breast or a cup or spoon.
- Wean your baby off the supplements gradually.

## Other resources

- <http://www.lowmilksupply.org>

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