

# Low Milk Supply

Mothers may worry that they do not have enough breastmilk for their baby. After all, it is hard to see how much milk a baby is getting from the breast. If you feel you don't have enough, see your health care provider because it can affect both you and your baby. The information below may help you figure out if you really have a low milk supply and what you can do to boost your supply.

## You May Have a Low Milk Supply if...

- Your baby is not gaining weight. Most babies lose weight in the first 4 to 5 days of life but are back to birth weight between days 10 to 14. Then babies usually gain about 4 ounces every week until 4 months of age, when weight gain slows down.
- Your baby does not have an appropriate number of wet and poopy diapers every 24 hours. Your baby should have 1 wet diaper for every day of life and 2 to 3 poopy diapers every 24 hours until the baby is 5 to 6 days old. After that, the baby should have between 6 to 8 wet diapers and 1 to 2 poopy diapers every 24 hours.
- You have a medical condition which may affect how much mature breastmilk you can make. Mothers with a history of thyroid issues, breast surgeries, hormone issues, retained placenta fragments, polycystic ovaries, extreme blood loss, birth trauma, or high fluid intake during labor are at a higher risk for low milk supply. Speak to your health care provider, lactation consultant, or the ADHS Breastfeeding Hotline to figure out how to work with these situations.
- Your baby has a medical condition that affects how much milk he can get from the breast. Babies that have a hard time latching and getting milk from the breast may make it hard for his mother's body to establish a milk supply or can cause the milk supply to decrease. See your health care provider and get help from a lactation consultant for help with your baby's latch.

Check out our [24/7 website](#), [Breastfeeding Program](#) for more information or call the ADHS 24/7 Breastfeeding Hotline 1-800-833-4642

### Topics include:

- [Breastfeeding Baby's Diaper Guide](#)
- [Engorgement](#)
- [Is My Baby Getting Enough?](#)
- [Normal Growth Patterns](#)

## How to Prevent Low Milk Supply

- Start breastfeeding within one hour of birth. Babies who breastfeed within one hour are more likely to keep breastfeeding, which helps establish mom's milk supply.
- Breastfeed often, -between 8 to 14 times in 24 hours. Your body knows to make milk when milk is removed, either by a pump or a feeding baby.
- Your breasts do not need to feel full to be able to feed your baby. Let the baby feed when she shows signs of hunger and allow her to feed until she lets go of the breast on her own.
- Do not go too long between feedings. This can lead to engorgement, where the breasts are too full and become painful, which can decrease your milk supply.
- Feed only breastmilk if you can. If there is a medical need to supplement, you can use pumped or expressed (removed with your hand) breastmilk. Formula is digested slower, which may cause a baby to feed less often. This can impact your milk supply.
- If possible, choose birth control without the hormone estrogen, which can affect milk production. See a lactation consultant or your health care provider to help figure out what would work best for you.
- If you are not with your baby, pump or express breastmilk by hand. This can help avoid engorgement, which can decrease your milk supply.

## Ways to Increase Your Milk Supply

- Hold the baby skin to skin with you. Placing the baby on your skin tells your body to produce more milk, and lets the baby know to feed.
- Put the baby to your breast whenever he shows signs of hunger, such as sucking on his hands, rooting (turning his head to find food), or smacking or licking his lips.
- Breastfeed more often. The more often you remove milk, either by feeding or by hand or breast pump, the more milk you will make.
- Avoid engorgement. Engorgement causes decreased milk production. Don't wait until your breasts feel full to feed or pump. Keep your breasts soft.
- Breastfeed at night. Hormones that help make milk are high during the night between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., so your body will make more milk. It is normal for a baby to wake in the night to feed, which will keep your milk supply balanced with their feeding needs. Either feed your baby or pump or express milk to keep the milk supply high enough for the day.
- Pump or express milk when you are separated from your baby.
- Take care of your health needs. Be sure to drink fluids, making sure to get 64 to 80 ounces each day. Drink more if you are still thirsty. Also, don't forget to feed yourself. You need calories to make milk. You also need to get enough rest. Having a baby is hard work and your body is trying to heal from the birth. Resting helps your body to make milk and promotes healing.
- Massage your breasts before feeding the baby or pumping or expressing milk. Doing this before milk removal may lead to more milk production.



The following are normal and are **not** signs of a low milk supply

- You don't feel a "let-down" (tingling feeling)
- Your breasts feel soft
- You can't pump much milk
- Your breasts don't leak milk
- Your baby is waking in the night
- Your baby wants to feed often
- Your baby feeds for a long time
- Your baby fusses while at the breast
- Your baby has short feeds

Talk to your health care provider or a lactation consultant about any concerns and possible signs that your milk supply is going down. ADHS has a 24/7 Breastfeeding Hotline with an experienced lactation consultant to help answer your questions and help you overcome breastfeeding difficulties. All calls are free and private.

[Also available in Spanish.](#)



**24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline**  
1-800-833-4642

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