

Milk Supply

The first few days and weeks postpartum are the most important in terms of establishing a strong/full milk supply for the long-term. Frequent stimulation (8-12 times a day) is critical!



Best Practices to Ensure Successful Breast Milk Production and Increase Supply:

1. Empty your breasts **FREQUENTLY**

Breastfeeding is a “demand and supply” process, meaning the more milk your baby (or pump) demands, the more milk your body will supply. Therefore, one way to increase milk supply is to empty breasts more frequently by nursing or pumping to send a message to your body that you need more milk. For most breastfeeding moms, this means either nursing or pumping every two to three hours. Empty breasts tell our body to make more milk. Full breasts tell our bodies we don’t need more.

2. Empty your breasts **EFFECTIVELY**

Focusing on frequency alone may not do the trick. You may be nursing or pumping frequently but not emptying effectively and therefore your body isn’t getting the message it needs to make

more. To increase milk production you want to be sure to nurse **FREQUENTLY & EFFECTIVELY**.

To empty your breasts effectively:

- **Address latch issues**

Sometimes, your baby can be latched and “nursing” but not actually drinking. This can be due to issues such as a shallow latch, a sleepy baby, or even an anatomical issue like a tongue tie. If your baby isn’t drinking, address the underlying cause. A certified lactation consultant can help assess baby’s latch, evaluate milk “transfer” (amount baby drinks at breast), and help you make a plan for more effective feedings.

- **Use your hands**

You can also help your baby drain your breasts by using a gentle breast

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massage or a breast compression to squeeze the colostrum or milk into your baby's mouth. This goes for the pump, too—it doesn't always get every last drop. Massage breasts while pumping and then try hand expressing for a few minutes after your pump stops extracting milk. Research shows when we use our hands while pumping, our milk production increases. *Source: Jane Morton, MS, Stanford University*

- Check your pumping parts

First, asses that you are using the best size breast shields/flange for you. Proper breast shield fit is critical to ensure both comfort and optimal pumping output. If you don't think the pump is emptying your breasts effectively, consider trying a different shield size. Check the instructions or the manufacturer's website for information on sizing information and options. Also,

check your pump parts to ensure they aren't worn down and in need of replacement. This includes membranes and batteries.

3. Step away from the app

Don't obsess over timing your feeds. Just because your app says you may be done feeding, it doesn't mean your baby is. Follow your baby's cues and allow him to nurse as long as he wants. The whole "ten minutes a side" is old advice—when we cut our babies off because our apps say it's time, we could be sabotaging our milk production.

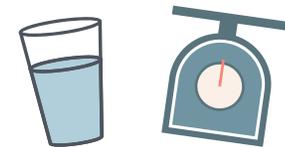
4. Offer both breasts every feed

After your baby drains one breast, offer the second one—even if you think she's done. Often with increased milk flow from the full side, the baby will become active again on the second side. If baby is sleepy after first breast, try burping, undressing baby, or changing baby's

diaper to wake them so you can feed baby on the second side and ensure a "full" feeding.

5. Hydrate

You don't need to go overboard here, but properly hydrating yourself is important. Drink enough to quench your thirst. Hydrate throughout the day, and make sure you have a glass of water nearby when you start to nurse or pump. Keep an eye on your urine—if it's very concentrated (dark yellow in color and/or has a strong odor), that's a sign you need to hydrate.



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6. Discuss herbal supplements with your health care provider

Many moms believe that making lactation cookies with ingredients like oats, brewer's yeast, and flax seed meal can help boost your supply. The research isn't solid on this, but it can't hurt.



Additionally, some doctors and lactation consultants will recommend herbal supplements to help boost supply. Anecdotally, many moms report success with taking herbal remedies like Fenugreek and Blessed Thistle.

Again, the studies on this have had mixed results but, it may be something to consider once you've checked in with your health care provider about any side effects, contraindications, or drug interactions.