

Supporting early lactation for mothers

Information for patients



Leeds
Maternity Care

Activ3

How can I make sure I produce enough milk for my baby?

You can develop your milk supply by stimulating your breasts at least eight times every 24 hours after your baby is born.

How can I stimulate my breasts?

The best way to stimulate your breasts is by breastfeeding.

When your baby breastfeeds, nerves in your nipple and areola are stimulated.

This causes a hormone called Prolactin to be released. Prolactin tells your breasts to make milk.

**In the early weeks after birth:
Frequent Breastfeeding = More
Prolactin = More Milk**

Your breasts will be stimulated most effectively when your baby latches well.



You can help your baby to latch well by using the 'CHINS principles' at every breastfeed.

C - CLOSE

Hold your baby close to your body so that they can take in a big mouthful of your breast.

H - HEAD FREE

Avoid placing your hand or fingers on the back of your baby's head. When their head is free to tilt back, they will be able to open their mouth wide.

I - IN LINE

Hold your baby with their head and body in line (with no twisting of the neck) so that they can drink and swallow easily.

N - NOSE TO NIPPLE

Position your baby with their nose opposite your nipple.

When they tilt their head back and open their mouth wide, your nipple will enter their mouth just underneath their top lip.

Your nipple will then rest against the soft part at the back of your baby's mouth.

S - SUSTAINABLE

Feed your baby in a position that is comfortable for you.

Credit: Dr Lynette Shotton

Your baby will stimulate your breasts most effectively when they are eager to feed. So, we encourage you to feed your baby when they are showing you feeding cues (e.g. licking their lips, sucking on their hands) instead of following a schedule.

How can I help my baby to get as much of my milk as possible when breastfeeding?

Here are some ways to help your baby drink more milk during a breastfeed.

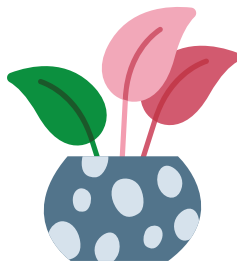
To use these techniques effectively, you need to be able to tell when your baby is swallowing. Watch for deep jaw dropping movements and listen out for a soft 'cuh' sound. Ask your midwife or support worker if you need help with this.

Breast compression

Breast compression is when you gently squeeze your breast with your hand while your baby sucks. You should release your hand when they pause. Squeeze again when they start sucking again and release again when they pause (and so on). This helps milk flow from your breast to your baby. It often keeps them motivated to feed better and longer.

Switch feeding

Switch feeding is when you start feeding your baby on one breast. You keep going until they swallow less often. Then, you unlatch them and offer the other breast. When they swallow less on the second breast, switch them back to the first. You can switch back and forth a few times during one feed to help them to get more milk.



What can I do if my baby won't breastfeed eight times every 24 hours?

In the early days, it is common for babies to feed less than eight times in 24 hours. Some babies may take longer to establish regular, effective breastfeeding. This is because they may need a bit more time to recover from their birth.

For example:

- Caesarean or instrumental birth.
- Prematurity
- Multiple birth i.e. twins/triplets

If your baby isn't ready to breastfeed eight times in 24 hours, it is important to stimulate your breasts by expressing your milk.

In the early weeks after birth: Frequent Expressing = More Prolactin = More Milk

You can express your milk by hand or by pump. The more expressed breast milk your baby gets, the sooner they will be ready to feed from your breast.

Lots of skin-to-skin contact also helps your baby feel ready to breastfeed.



What can I do if my milk supply doesn't seem to be increasing?

Milk production tends to increase around 2-3 days after birth.

However, some situations can delay milk production.

For example:

- Induction of labour
- Caesarean birth or instrumental birth.
- Significant bleeding after birth (post-partum haemorrhage)

Breastfeeding or expressing early and often after birth will reduce any delay and help you to make a good supply of milk.

If you and your baby have risk factors for delayed breastfeeding, you may need to use both hand expressing and pumping. This can help improve your milk supply.

What can I do if my baby loses weight?

It is normal for babies to lose up to 8% of their birthweight (on day three). Some babies will lose a little more than this. Whilst important, your baby's weight is not the only indicator of their wellbeing. We will assess how alert they are and ask you about their wet and dirty nappies to get a sense of how well they are feeding. Your midwife or support worker will help you make a plan to help your baby gain weight.

Is it okay for me to give my baby formula milk alongside breastfeeding (mixed feeding)?

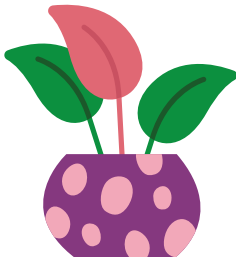
Most breastfed babies do not need extra feeds of formula milk. However, you have our unconditional support to feed your baby in the way that feels right for you. The following information is to help you to make a fully informed decision about how to feed your baby.

Remember, in the early weeks after birth: Frequent breastfeeding or expressing = More Prolactin = More Milk

Using formula milk in the first few days of your baby's life can affect their interest in breastfeeding. This can reduce your milk supply now and in the future.

Research also shows that giving formula milk to your breastfed baby in the early days after birth can increase the risk of food allergies and intolerances.

If you still have worries about your milk supply or breastfeeding, reach out to the Infant Feeding team at leedsth-tr.activ8@nhs.net





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