

How to Make More Milk

The best way to increase your milk supply depends upon breast stimulation. You can put your baby to the breast for more feedings and/or express milk using a breast pump. The more time you spend breastfeeding or pumping, the more prolactin hormone is made. Prolactin is known as the “milk hormone” and helps to build and increase your milk supply.

If Your Baby Can Breastfeed:

- Put your baby to the breast frequently for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours. This will be at least 8 to 12 times in 24 hours
- Feed your baby at night and early morning. This is very helpful because prolactin is naturally high during this time
- Pumping for 5 to 10 minutes after your baby nurses will also put more demand on your body to produce milk

If Your Baby does NOT Breastfeed:

- Pump as often as your baby is needing to feed. For newborns this will be at least 8 times in 24 hours. Pump for 10-15 minutes.
- Use a hands-free bra. While pumping, use your hands to massage breasts to help empty them. This will tell the brain to continue to make more milk. The hands-free bra will give you time to drink something, have a snack or just rest a bit while pumping

Other Techniques You Can Try:

- Apply a warm, wet washcloth or towel to your breasts or take a warm shower before feeding or pumping
- Massage your breasts before and during feeding
- Find a quiet place to breastfeed your baby or pump. Think about a nice place to visit or milk flowing to your baby. Play music you or your baby enjoys while feeding or pumping
- Drink water or other fluids such as tea, juice or milk. Avoid caffeine
- Keep a log of feedings/pumping to monitor your progress
- Power pumping once daily. Pump for 10 minutes, rest for 10 minutes, and then repeat. Do this for one hour

Things That Can Reduce Milk Supply:

- Stress
- Birth control pills, patches or shot
- Water pills
- Cigarettes
- Hormonal conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) or low thyroid levels
- History of breast surgery
- Losing weight too fast. Your weight loss should be no more than 2 to 4 pounds each month

Call for Breastfeeding Help if:

- You do not see an increase in your milk production in 7 days
- You feel your baby may not be getting enough breast milk.

Please call the Breastfeeding and Pumping Helpline at (816) 346-1309 if you have any questions or concerns.

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