

Am I making enough milk?

Often, moms perceive that they do not make enough milk because they do not make “extra” milk. Other times, they think the baby is eating too often, the breasts feel too soft, the baby is fussy at certain times of the day or they are unable to pump much milk.

Many moms also complain that they do not leak, their baby nurses are quicker than they are or they are unable to feel a letdown.

The reality is that none of these things mean that a mom has an inadequate supply.

We ask questions like:

- Is the baby is growing?
- Are they having plentiful output (poops and urine diapers) each day?
- Are they waking often to feed and seeming satisfied after?

Since breastmilk is easily digested, breastfed babies may eat more often than bottle-fed babies - somewhere between eight to 12 times in a 24 hour period. The baby will be described as alert and active and will seem satisfied after feedings, often times with relaxed hands. Moms will also report hearing swallows during the feed.

The greatest indicator of sufficient milk intake is weight gain, though an initial loss is normal and expected as babies shed the extra fluid in their tissues. Once the milk supply is in, we expect most babies to gain close to one ounce per day. After three to four months, the number will gradually decrease.

Another reliable indicator is output. By day six, we expect to have six pale and mild smelling wet diapers and no more than four bowel movements (BM) that have transitioned to the yellow, mustard, seedy stools. Over time, the number of stools will fluctuate and breastfed babies may go many days without a BM as their body is absorbing all of the nutrients. Even then, we expect soft and profuse stools.

The older the baby gets, the more adequate they feed, and therefore, they spend less time at the breast. Since many mothers do not feel their letdowns, that nor the firmness of the breast tells us how well the infant is being fed.

How do I increase my milk supply?

The answer to this question is: more. More feeds, more often, more milk and more emptying the breasts.

It is important to remember that our bodies work off supply and demand, so in this case, more is more.

Limit pacifiers, use both breasts per feed and make sure to empty both breasts with each feed, even if it means switching sides multiple times throughout the feed to keep the baby stimulated and awake.

Pumping after feeds will also “trick the body” into thinking that the baby wants more and can often help increase supply.

If these things do not seem like enough, a visit with a lactation consultant would be beneficial to you and your child.