

# How to Be Sure Your Baby Is Getting Enough Milk

by Nancy Mohrbacher, IBCLC, FILCA

This is the #1 concern of breastfeeding mothers. Here's what you need to know from birth to six weeks.

## BIRTH TO DAY 4

Keep baby close and feed often

### What to watch for

- Normal weight loss of is up to 10% of birth weight by Day 4.
- Look for 1-2 wet diapers each day and black stools, changing to green on Day 3 or 4.

### What to expect

- At birth, your breasts contain the first milk—colostrum—in just the right amounts for your newborn.
- Baby may spend much time at the breast, nursing on and off.
- Your nipples may feel tender for the first minute or two and then feel better.

### Tips

- Keep your baby on your body as much as you're comfortable. This makes baby's transition from womb to world easier and brings in your milk faster.
- Breastfeed with baby laying tummy down on your body, so you can feed and rest.
- Make sure your baby feeds at least 8 times each day. Feedings may be bunched together. If needed, help baby onto your breast while baby is drowsy or in a light sleep.
- If baby fusses after feeding, offer each breast more than once.
- Breastfeed long and often to make more milk faster.

- Keep your baby on your body skin-to-skin for easier feedings and more milk.
- If breastfeeding hurts, ask for help.
- If you don't know where you can get breastfeeding help after you get home, ask now.

### Keep in mind

- Your breasts are never empty. It's okay for baby to keep going back and forth from breast to breast over and over.
- Lots of breastfeeding helps prevent engorged breasts.
- When breastfeeding well, newborns usually do better without water or formula.
- Most mothers can make enough milk for twins, triplets, and more.

## DAY 4 TO WEEK 6

Set your long-term milk production

### What to watch for

- By Day 5, baby's stools turn yellow. After that, every day expect at least 3-4 yellow stools the size of a U.S. quarter (22 mm) or larger.
- Expect 5-6 or more wet diapers a day by Day 5.
- Baby should be back to birth weight by 2 weeks.

### What to expect

- Most babies feed 8-12 times or more per day but not at set times. They may bunch feedings close together for part of the day or night.
- Babies may take one or both breasts at feedings. Offer both and let your baby decide.



- Your baby may want to feed again soon after breastfeeding. This is normal now.
- Most mothers start to make much more milk on Day 3 or 4
- Drained breasts make milk faster. Full breasts make milk slower.
- Some babies sleep for one 4-5 hour stretch each day. It may not be at night.
- Between Days 1 and 40, your milk increases from about 1 ounce (30 mL) to about 30 ounces (900 mL) per day.

### Tips

- Breastfeed whenever baby wants to. You'll know it's time when baby turns her head from side to side with an open mouth or when she puts her hand to her mouth.
- Ignore the clock. Let baby decide when and how long to breastfeed.
- Don't wait to feed until baby fusses or cries. When baby is upset, it's harder to settle at breast.
- Use positions that feel good to both baby and you.
- Breastfeed only. Avoid pacifiers and any other liquids.
- If your breasts feel very full, breastfeed more or express milk just until you feel comfortable. This will help ease breast fullness faster.
- If breastfeeding hurts, get help. A small change in how deeply your baby takes the breast may be all you need for greater comfort.

- Learn to sleep while you breastfeed. Practice during the day.

### Keep in mind

- More breastfeeding makes more milk.
- Mothers need other mothers. Join a mothers group nearby or online.

### Seek Breastfeeding Help When

- Breastfeeding hurts.
- Baby loses more than 10% of birth weight or after Day 4 gains less than 1 oz. (30 g) per day.

### The following are NOT reliable signs of low milk production

- Baby has fussy times. (Most babies do.)
- Baby wants to feed again soon after breastfeeding. (Most babies do.)
- Baby wants to feed more often. (This adjusts your milk production as needed.)
- Your breasts no longer feel full. (Normal at around 3-4 weeks.)
- Baby wants to feed less often or for a shorter time. (Babies get faster with practice.)
- Baby wakes a lot at night. (Most babies need night feedings to get enough milk.)
- Baby will take a bottle after breastfeeding. (Babies like to suck.)
- You can't express much milk. (This skill takes practice.)

### You Have Plenty of Milk When Baby Gains Weight Well On Breastfeeding Alone

Baby's Age	Average Weight Gain Per Week	Average Weight Gain Per Month
Birth to Day 4	≤ -7-10%	n/a
Day 4 to 4 months	+ 7-8 oz. (200-222 g)	1.75-2.0 lbs. (0.79-.88 kg)
4-6 months	+ 4-5 oz. (100-122 g)	1-1.25 lb. (0.4-0.45 kg)
6-12 months	+ 2-3 (58-85 g)	0.5-0.75 lb. (0.23-0.34 kg)

**After 6 weeks, breastfeeding gets much faster. That's when the "adjustment period" becomes the "reward period." It is well worth this early time investment. Enjoy!**

