

## **Increase Breast Milk Production**

Many mothers fear they are not producing enough breast milk to satisfy their baby. In most cases, the fear is based on false alarms, such as shorter nursing times or natural appetite growth. These are natural scenarios many mothers experience when breastfeeding. If your baby, however, is not gaining weight, or worse, if he's losing weight, then increasing breast milk production can help.

### **Increasing Production Pre-Breastfeeding**

1. Consume a minimum of 1,800 calories a day and drink at least 6 glasses of fluids while you are lactating.

If you're currently dieting, it could be decreasing your milk production. Unsurprisingly, what you eat has a big impact on the quality and quantity of the milk produced. Here are some general guidelines for you to remember about diet and breast milk:

- i. Find excellent sources of calcium. These will help your little baby's little bones grow healthy and strong. Calcium-rich foods include dairy products (opt for organic dairy products, however), leafy green vegetables, and certain fish (sardines and salmon).
- ii. Eat fruits and vegetables. Make fruits and vegetables a big part of your diet, as they are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- iii. Opt for complex carbohydrates. Complex carbs are healthier than processed carbs, which you may by and large avoid. Complex carbs include such things as brown rice, whole-grain pasta and bread, as well as beans.
- iv. Opt for lean meat. Lean meat is better than fatty cuts. Think skinless chicken breast, fish, low-fat dairy products, and soy products like tofu.

2. Consult your doctor about using prescription or herbal supplements to increase breast milk.

Herbs that work well include fenugreek, blessed thistle and red raspberry. The prescription drug metoclopramide is sometimes used as a last resort by doctors to treat low milk production in nursing mothers.

3. Supplement feedings with pumping

Pumping is beneficial for two reasons. First, pumping allows you to store breast milk when your baby doesn't need it, allowing you to amass and store more expressed milk. Second, pumping stimulates the production of more breast milk.

Invest in a high-quality pump. Pumping isn't exactly the spice of life, so it pays to invest in one that works well. You can rent a hospital-grade pump if you don't own a high-quality, double pump.

Whether you are at work or at home, consider pumping for 15 minutes every couple of hours. Either that, or pump for 5 to 10 minutes after nursing. Pumping at least 8 times during a 24-hour period will help to quickly increase breast milk production. If you can't pump immediately after nursing, try to pump halfway in between feedings.

Pump both breasts at the same time. Pumping both breasts will give you twice as much breast milk twice as fast in addition to helping stimulate more production.

4. Limit the use of pacifiers and bottles while you're trying to make more breast milk.

This makes sure all your baby's sucking needs are met at the breast. As the baby gets older, it will be easier for him to go back and forth from breast to pacifier without you losing important breast stimulation. If you are using bottles for supplementing, try to replace those with a syringe or spoon.

## **Increasing Production during Breastfeeding**

1. Relax

Loads of stress can hurt your ability to produce milk. Try to relax before pumping or breastfeeding by playing soothing music, looking at pictures that produce happiness, or just having a moment with the love of your life. If you want to, try putting warm compresses on your breasts or massaging them for a short period right before you intend to pump or breastfeed.

2. Allow your baby to nurse frequently for as long as he wants.

The more often your breasts are stimulated, the more milk your body makes. At least 8 feedings in a 24-hour period is ideal, more if possible. If you normally feed on a set schedule, allow the baby to feed on demand to increase your breast milk production.

3. Practice undressing your baby to stimulate skin-to-skin contact during breast feeding. Undressing your baby while he breast feeds may help him feed longer. (Longer sessions mean more production of breast milk.)

Undress your baby down to his diaper, but drape a blanket over his back to ensure that he doesn't get cold. Take off your bra and wear a shirt that can be unbuttoned on the front to promote skin-to-skin contact.

4. Offer your baby both breasts at every feeding to let your body know to make more breast milk. Switch breasts as soon as your baby slows down. It's best if you can switch again and offer each breast twice during a single feeding session. Let your baby nurse for as long as possible-until he falls asleep or detaches.

5. Try taking a nursing "vacation."

For a day or two, take your baby to bed with you and do nothing but nurse when the urge hits your baby. Of course, you get to go to the

kitchen and the bathroom and hit other motherly duties, but this vacation is all about you and your newborn.

During this vacation, take advantage of nap nursing, which is exactly what it sounds: sleeping with your baby ever-close to his favorite food. This relaxes both mother and child. It also increases the stimulation of milk-producing hormones.