

Making Milk for Your Baby

QUESTION: How often should I breastfeed?

ANSWER: The first six weeks, your baby will breastfeed 8–12 times every 24 hours. Every baby is different, sometimes your baby may breastfeed every 2–3 hours. Other times she may cluster feed and breastfeed every hour for a few hours, then take a longer break until she wants to breastfeed again.

The key is to keep track of how many times she breastfeeds, not how many hours apart she breastfeeds. Breastfeed her when she is showing hunger cues for example:

- Sticking out her tongue
- Sucking her hands
- Moving her head side to side

QUESTION: How long should a breastfeeding session last?

ANSWER: In the beginning, breastfeeding can take about 30–40 minutes total on both sides. It takes time for your body and breasts to adjust to making milk. It also takes time for your baby to learn to breastfeed well.

As your baby gets older, breastfeeding may take only 10–15 minutes total. Your baby is able to breastfeed in a shorter time and still get the milk she needs. Some babies start to breastfeed less at night and breastfeed more during the day as they start to sleep longer stretches. Every baby is different, so follow your baby's cues.

QUESTION: Why does my baby pull off of my breast? Doesn't she like breastfeeding?

ANSWER: In the first few days of breastfeeding, your baby may pull off of your breast if she is not positioned well. Make sure her chin is not pushed down towards

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white tank top, smiling warmly as she holds a baby in her arms. The baby is wearing a light-colored onesie and looking towards the camera. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.

Your baby will grow a lot in the first year and so will your baby's appetite! Knowing what to expect helps mothers relax more & enjoy breastfeeding.

her chest. This position makes it hard to swallow so your baby may pull off to readjust her head and neck into the right position.

To help your baby get into the right position, support behind her neck with the web of your hand. Her head will tilt back a little and her nose will be pointing slightly up, away from your breast as you bring her towards you. When she is latched, her chin will be touching your breast and there may be a tiny space between your breast and her nose.

As your baby gets older, she may start to pull off the breast because she gets distracted. A natural part of your baby's development is to want to explore and see her surroundings. Your baby still enjoys breastfeeding but wants to be involved with what is going around her. This can last a few days or weeks. Some mothers find it helpful to go into a quiet room to breastfeed their baby, so the baby can focus on breastfeeding.

QUESTION: How do I know my baby is getting enough?

ANSWER: Feeding your baby on demand when she is showing hunger cues will help your body make the milk your baby needs. Other signs that you are making what your baby needs is counting how many wet and dirty diapers she has. Remember what goes in, must come out!

WET & DIRTY DIAPERS

The first few days, your baby will have a few wet diapers a day. By day 5, she will have 6–8 wet diapers daily. Over the first week, the amount of dirty diapers she has will increase. During this time, her stool will change color from black and sticky to yellow and seedy.

STOOLS OF A BREASTFED BABY

Day	# of Stools	Color
1–2	1+	black
3–4	3+	green
5+	3–4+	yellow

WEIGHT GAIN

It is normal for your baby to lose a little weight the first few days. Your baby should be back to her birth weight by the time she is ten days old. Your baby's health care provider will also make sure your baby is gaining the right weight for her age.

WEIGHT GAIN OF A BREASTFED BABY

Baby's Age	Average Weight Gain Per Week	Average Weight Gain Per Month
Birth–Day 4	≤ 7–10%	n/a
Day 4–4 months	+ 7–8 oz. (200–222 g)	1.75–2.0 lbs. (0.79–0.88 kg)
4–6 months	+ 4–5 oz. (100–122 g)	1–1.25 lbs. (0.4–0.45 kg)
6–12 months	+ 2–3 oz. (58–85 g)	0.5–0.75 lbs. (0.23–0.34 kg)

References

Mohrbacher N. *Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple: A Guide for Helping Mothers*. Amarillo, TX: Hale Publishing, LP; 2010.
Spangler A. *Breastfeeding: A Parent's Guide*. 9th ed. Cincinnati, OH: Specialty Lithographing Co; 2010.



The more your baby breastfeeds, the more milk you will make.

If you are concerned that your baby is not having enough wet or dirty diapers, or not feeding enough, contact your baby's health care provider. Get help from a lactation consultant to help make sure you are latching and positioning your baby well for breastfeeding and giving your body the best chance to make enough milk for your baby.

QUESTION: Why don't my breasts feel full anymore?

ANSWER: When your baby is around 3–4 weeks old, your body has learned how much milk your baby needs. Your breasts may not feel as full as they did when you first started breastfeeding. If you skip or delay a breastfeeding session, you may notice this fullness again. If you do, breastfeed or pump as soon as you can to avoid breast tissue damage.

QUESTION: Why does my baby suddenly want to breastfeed more often?

ANSWER: When your baby has a growth spurt, she will want more breast milk. She will breastfeed more often to help your breasts make more milk. The more she breastfeeds, the more milk you will make. During these times, let your baby breastfeed as often as she wants. Make sure she has a good latch and breastfeeding is comfortable.

Your baby will have several growth spurts through her first year (and childhood). These periods usually only last a few days. Contact your baby's health care provider if they last longer or you have other concerns.

This is general information and does not replace the advice of your healthcare provider. If you have a problem you cannot solve quickly, seek help right away.

Every baby is different, if in doubt, contact your physician or other healthcare provider.