

Increasing Your Milk Supply

Remember the three B's of breastfeeding: the breast, the baby, and the brain. For increasing milk supply, the breast needs more stimulation from the baby and making that happen will require some adjustments in your brain. To increase your milk supply, you have to make breastfeeding a priority.

Increase Feeding Frequency

Breastfeed your baby at least every two hours during the day to help with increasing milk supply. If your baby has been napping for more than two hours, wake her up for a feeding. Consider waking your baby for at least one extra night feeding, too, especially if you have a baby who sleeps for more than a four or five hour stretch at night.

Don't Wait for Your Breasts to "Fill Up"

There is always milk in your breasts for your baby, and more milk is made while you feed. Studies have shown that fat levels in milk are higher when the time between feedings is shorter. This means when you offer the breast again minutes after the last feeding (when your breasts may still feel "empty"), your baby is getting high-fat milk that will help him gain weight.

Offer the Breast More Often

The "law of supply and demand" that governs milk production implies that babies will demand the milk they need. Yet, this does not always work. Some babies, especially sleepy babies and those with mellow personalities, may not breastfeed as frequently as they need to without mother doing a bit of prodding. If this sounds like your baby, you need to take the lead and give your baby more frequent opportunities to nurse. Skin-to-skin contact, nap and night nursing, and sling feeding will help to stimulate longer, more frequent feedings.

Nurse Longer

Increasing milk supply will be helped if you don't limit the length of your baby's feedings to a predetermined number of minutes on each side. Allow your baby to finish the first breast before switching to the other side. This gives baby an opportunity to fill up on the high-fat hindmilk brought down by the milk-ejection reflex. If you switch your baby to the second side too soon, he'll fill up on the watery foremilk, which will make his tummy feel full but may not give him enough calories to grow.

Increasing Milk Supply by Double-Nursing

After you feed your baby and he seems finished, hold or carry him upright and awake for 10 to 20 minutes, allowing any trapped air bubbles to be burped up. This makes room for more milk. Then feed him again on both breasts before you let him go to sleep. Double nursing, like switch nursing, stimulates more milk ejection reflexes, thus increasing milk supply and its calorie content.

Undress Baby During Feedings

Skin-to-skin contact helps awaken sleepy babies and stimulates less enthusiastic feeders. Undress baby down to his diaper. To maximize skin contact, take off your bra and wear a shirt that you can unbutton all the way down the front. To prevent baby from getting chilled, place a blanket around his back.

Nap and Night Nurse

One of the most powerful ways for increasing milk supply is to "take your baby to bed and nurse." This relaxes both you and your baby and stimulates longer and more frequent nursings. It also increases your milk-producing hormones and reminds you that breastfeeding your baby is the most important thing you can do at this stage of your life together.

Sling Feed

Naturally, keeping baby inches away from his favorite cuisine will entice him to eat more therefore increasing milk supply. Wear your baby in a baby sling between feedings, even when he is napping. In fact, some babies feed better and more often when on the move.

Get Focused on Increasing Milk Supply

Are you trying to do too much, so that you're not taking enough time to sit down and feed and enjoy your baby? If you're interested in increasing milk supply for your baby, you have to make breastfeeding and taking care of yourself a priority. Let go of other responsibilities for a while. Have your partner share in non-feeding infant care, so that you can rest, take a walk, or take a shower.

Get Household Help

Get help with laundry, dishes, cooking, and cleaning. If you have a demanding toddler, hire a teen to come to your house after school to entertain your older child and give you a few hours of relief so you can sit and relax and nurse your baby.

No Pacifiers, No Bottle

When there are concerns about weight gain, all your baby's sucking should be done at the breast. Bottles of formula will interfere with the balance between your milk supply and baby's need, so will satisfying baby's sucking need with a pacifier. If it is medically necessary to give your baby supplementary feedings, try alternatives to bottles that don't involve artificial nipples.

Think Baby, Think Milk

While you are feeding, stroke and calm your baby using a lot of skin-to-skin contact. Enjoy his sweet face and the feel of his skin. This will help in increasing milk supply by stimulating your milk ejection reflex. The milk ejection reflex squeezes the milk you make out of the milk glands and down into the ducts and milk sinuses where it's available to baby. Between breastfeedings and immediately before a feeding, imagine your infant nursing at your breast and your breasts pouring out milk to satisfy your baby.

Try Herbs for Increasing Milk Supply

There are no scientific studies that show that certain herbs will help you with increasing milk supply, but some mothers and lactation consultants believe that [certain herbs](#) can stimulate your body to make more milk. Remember, though, that an herbal tea or other concoction cannot substitute for more frequent nursing as a way for increasing milk supply.

Get Professional Help

Contact your local [La Leche League](#) Leader and/or a professional lactation consultant for tips on increasing milk supply. A lactation consultant can help you evaluate your baby's latch-on and suck so you can be certain that baby is nursing effectively. Support from a La Leche League Leader or the other mothers in a La Leche League Group will help you feel more confident about your ability to nourish your baby.

Trust that Nature's System Works

If you're nursing often enough, and baby is sucking effectively, you *will* make enough milk. It's rare that a mother is unable to produce enough milk for her baby. And while it may seem that your life is stressful, mothers throughout history have breastfed their babies through war, famine, and personal tragedies. Your body nourished this baby through pregnancy. There's no reason to think that you won't succeed at breastfeeding.

William Sears, MD

<http://www.askdrsears.com/topics/feeding-eating/breastfeeding/faqs/increasing-milk-supply>