

Breast Milk Supply FAQs

How much mother's milk do I need to make to exclusively feed my baby?

At 2 weeks after delivery, the goal is 700-1000 ml. or at least 24 oz. in 24 hours. Even mothers who have preterm babies need to fully develop their milk supply to this level in the first 2 weeks after delivery.

When will my milk volume increase?

Women generally make more milk by 3 days after delivery. The following conditions can delay milk increase:

- C-section
- Diabetes
- First-time mom
- Pre-eclampsia

How do I increase my milk supply?

Empty breasts frequently – at least 8 times in 24 hours. This helps maintain a steady level of the milk-making hormone. Pump at least one time at night. Pump just before bedtime and right away when you wake up in the morning. Times can be varied to get 8 pumps per 24 hours. It is also helpful to drink 16-20 oz. of water before bed. Your bladder will wake you up naturally.

Common routines:

- Midnight, 5am, 8am, 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm
- 10pm, 2am, 6am, 8am, 11am, 2pm, 4pm, 7pm

Completely “empty” your breasts of milk. Your breasts make milk fastest when they are “empty”. Once your milk slows down or almost stops, restart the pump. Continue to pump 2 minutes after flow stops.

- Hand expression helps release first milk and can help increase volume. To view on-line streaming video: <http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/HandExpression.html> (7 1/2 min)
- Breast massage or compression massaging or gentle squeezing breasts while pumping will help to empty your breasts more completely. View online: <http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/MaxProduction.html> (9 1/2 minutes)
- Hold your baby skin to skin. Keeping your baby close will help increase supply, improve the let-down reflex and is comforting to you and your baby.

Pumping tips:

- Start with suction low because the first few pulls may be uncomfortable. After that pumping should be comfortable.
- Gradually increase suction on pump until you feel pulling sensation. If you feel pain, then slightly decrease the level of suction.
- Use the best size pumping flange or funnel. Flange size varies with nipple size. There are different sizes available. Avoid too tight (blanching) or too loose (not enough to stretch nipple).
- Pump at your baby's bedside. Some mothers are able to empty their breasts more effectively when they are with their baby.
- Keep a pumping diary. You can monitor your 24-hour totals and day-to-day progress (see last page).
- Ask for help if you are having difficulty or pain while breastfeeding or pumping.

Pain inhibits your release or “let down” of milk. Take your pain medications as needed to prevent pain from birth process. Often women experience tenderness on their nipples from breastfeeding or pumping in the first few days. If this doesn’t go away by the end of the first week contact a lactation consultant.

What else do I need to know?

If frequent and complete emptying, hand expression and or breast massage have not helped meet your breastfeeding or pumping goals, contact your lactation consultant for additional support.

Lactation Support Program

Minneapolis 612-813-7654
St. Paul 651-220-7126

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the lactation support program.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our web site: www.childrensmn.org/A-Z.

Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Patient/Family Education
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
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Breast pumping log

Use this pumping log to help you reach your goal of 24 to 30 ounces per day.

Date: _____ Skin-to-skin care (check if done) _____ 24 hour milk total _____

Time of day										
Minutes of pumping										
Amount of milk										

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