

# Making Milk for Your Baby

By Nancy Mohrbacher, IBCLC, Lactation Consultant, Ameda Breastfeeding Products  
Co-author of *Breastfeeding Made Simple* and *The Breastfeeding Answer Book*

## Birth to Day 4—Keep Baby Close, Feed Often

### FUN FACTS

- A newborn's stomach is as small as a marble. At birth, you have just the right amount of milk to fill it.
- Your breasts are never empty.
- When breastfeeding well, babies generally do better without water or formula.
- Lots of breastfeeding brings in more milk faster.
- Lots of breastfeeding helps prevent engorged breasts.
- Typically, one mother can make enough milk for twins, triplets, and more.
- Keep your baby's skin touching yours. Feedings go better, and you make more milk.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- Lots of breastfeeding.
- Your nipple may feel tender for the first minute or two and then feel better.
- If your baby fusses, offer each breast more than once.
- Expect 1-2 wet diapers each day and black stools.
- Many newborns lose up to 10% of birth weight by Day 4.

### THINGS TO LEARN

- Practice breastfeeding lying down, so you can feed and rest.
- Help baby take the breast deep in his or her mouth so feeding feels better. If it hurts, ask for help.
- Make sure your baby feeds at least 8 times a day. Feedings may be bunched together. Wake if needed.
- Ask where you can get breastfeeding help if needed.

You know how much your milk matters to your baby. Many mothers wonder how milk supply works. Here are the basics as your baby grows.



## Day 4 to Week 6—Setting Your Milk Supply

### FUN FACTS

- A baby's stomach grows to the size of a chicken's egg by Day 10.
- Most babies feed 8-12 times a day but not at set times. They may bunch feedings close together for part of the day or night.
- Babies may take one breast at a feeding, or they may need to feed from both breasts. Let your baby decide.
- More breastfeeding makes more milk.
- Most mothers start to make much more milk starting on Day 3 or 4.
- Drained breasts make milk faster. Full breasts make milk slower.
- Your milk supply grows from about 1 ounce (30 mL) to about 30 ounces (900 mL) between Days 1 and 40.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- Anything that routinely delays or replaces a breastfeeding may lower milk supply later.
- If your breasts feel very full, breastfeed more or express milk. This will make you feel better, not worse.
- By Day 3-5, baby's black stools turn first green then yellow. After that, expect 3-4 or more yellow stools the size of a U.S. quarter (2.5 cm) or larger every day.

- Expect 5-6 or more wet diapers a day by Day 5.
- Your baby should be back to birth weight by 2 weeks.
- Your baby may want to feed again soon after breastfeeding. This is normal now.
- Most babies sleep for one 4-5 hour stretch each day. It may not be at night.

### THINGS TO LEARN

- Breastfeed whenever your baby wants to. You'll know it's time when your baby turns her head, turns from side to side with an open mouth, or when she puts her hand to her mouth.
- Don't wait until your baby fusses or cries to feed. When upset, it's harder to feed well.
- Use a hold that feels good for you and your baby.
- During the day, practice breastfeeding lying down so you can sleep while you feed. You learn better when you're not tired.
- If breastfeeding hurts, get help. A small change in how your baby takes the breast may be all you need to feel better.
- Find a mothers' group near you. Spend time with other breastfeeding mothers.

#### Some Reasons to Seek Breastfeeding Help

- If breastfeeding hurts.
- If baby loses more than 10% of birth weight before Day 4 or gains weight too slowly.

## 6 Weeks to 6 Months, Breastfeeding Gets Faster

### FUN FACTS

- Your baby's stomach is larger and holds more milk. She may feed less often.
- Most mothers no longer feel full, even with lots of milk.
- Babies need about as much milk per day at six weeks as six months.
- Now breastfeeding should start to take less time than bottle feeding.
- When breastfeeding well, a baby usually does best on mother's milk alone until about six months.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- Older babies are faster feeders. The baby who used to feed 40 minutes may now be done in 10-15 minutes.
- Some babies this age have fewer stools but gain weight just fine.

- Older babies may pull off the breast when they hear or see things around them.

### THINGS TO LEARN

- Trust your baby to know the right time to feed.
- Practice breastfeeding when away from home until you feel at ease.

## Even when breastfeeding is going well, you may experience some of the following:

- Your baby has fussy times. (Most babies do.)
- She wants to feed again soon after breastfeeding. (Most babies do.)
- She wants to feed more often. (This adjusts your milk supply.)
- Your breasts no longer feel full. (Usually at around 3-4 weeks.)
- She wants to feed less often or for a shorter time. (Babies get faster with practice.)
- She wakes a lot at night. (Babies need to do this to get enough milk.)
- She will take a bottle after breastfeeding. (Babies like to suck.)
- You can't express much milk. (This skill takes practice.)
- Your breasts may or may not leak. (This is not a gauge of milk supply.)

## You Are Making 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	+ 6 oz. (170 g)	1.5 lbs. (680 g)
4-6 months	+ 4-5 oz. (113-142 g)	1 lb. (452 g)
6-12 months	+ 2-4 oz. (57-113 g)	0.5 lb. (228 g)

Visit [ameda.com](http://ameda.com) to learn more about making milk for your baby after six months.

*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, and your baby may not be average. If in doubt, contact your physician or other healthcare provider.*