

MILK SUPPLY GUIDE

Empowering your breastfeeding journey with Women's Health First

How Milk Production Works

Your body operates on a *Supply & Demand* system. The more your baby feeds, the more milk your body produces. Think of it like placing an order: every time your baby nurses or you pump, your brain receives the message to produce more.

The Key Hormones:

Prolactin	Signals your breasts to make more milk.
Oxytocin	Triggers the "let-down" reflex to help milk flow.

If feedings are skipped or spaced too far apart, your body assumes less milk is needed and production may slow down.

The Early Days: Colostrum

In the first 2-3 days, your body produces **colostrum**—a thick, golden, nutrient-rich "liquid gold." While the amounts are small (teaspoons at a time), it is the perfect amount for a newborn whose stomach is only the size of a marble.

Around day 3-4, your milk will "come in," becoming thinner, more plentiful, and making your breasts feel fuller.

Feeding Frequency & Hunger Cues

Newborns typically need to feed **8-12 times per day** (roughly every 2-3 hours). Since breast milk is easily digested, frequent feeding is normal and essential for building supply.

Watch for Hunger Cues:

- Rooting or lip smacking
- Sucking on hands
- Fussiness
- Stretching

The Golden Rule

Empty Breasts Make More Milk: The more thoroughly a breast is emptied, the faster it refills. An empty breast sends a "speed up" signal, while a full breast sends a "slow down" signal.

Signs Your Baby is Getting Enough

Physical Signs	Growth Milestones
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6-8 wet diapers daily• Stools turn bright yellow by day 5• Audible swallowing during feeds• Baby seems satisfied after nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaining 15-30g (0.5-1oz) daily after day 5• Back to birth weight by 10-14 days

Protecting Your Supply

What Can Lower Supply:	How to Build Supply:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skipping feedings• Supplementing without pumping• Poor latch or incomplete emptying• Stress, illness, or dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feed on demand (follow cues)• Ensure a deep latch (lips flanged)• Skin-to-skin contact• Stay hydrated and well-rested

When to Seek Help

Contact your provider or a lactation consultant if breastfeeding is painful, your milk hasn't come in by day 5, or if your baby shows signs of dehydration (dry mouth, dark urine, or excessive sleepiness).

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Schedule your consultation today.

