

Making and maintaining your milk

Your first milk (colostrum) is thick and golden. Early milk comes in very small amounts – yet is full of nutrients and proteins that boost your baby’s immune system.

Your milk will change over the first 3-5 days into larger amounts of mature milk, which has more water to satisfy your baby’s thirst.

When the amount of milk increases, it is often referred to as your milk “coming in.” This is misleading because you do have milk for your baby prior to that, it is just smaller amounts of colostrum.

Did you know?
Introducing commercial milk formula can decrease your milk supply because you are skipping a nursing session each time you use these products.

Move it or lose it

- Making a full supply of milk requires frequent removal of milk from your body
- If milk is *not* removed from your body, your brain doesn’t get the message to make more milk
- You can use gentle massage with hand expression and/or pumping to remove milk (and keep making milk) if you are separated from your baby



Tonya’s Story

At first, Tonya didn’t want to breastfeed because she had heard it could hurt. But with all the health benefits for her baby and herself, she decided to try. After her baby was born, she did try, and just as she expected, it did hurt her nipples a bit. Her lactation consultant and peer counselor helped to find the source of the pain and make changes to reduce the discomfort. This helped, but then a few days postpartum she felt pain in both breasts. Again, she got help from a skilled support person, and was able to stick with it. In a couple of weeks all the discomforts were gone and never came back. Tonya is still breastfeeding at a year out and is very happy she continued – the discomfort in the beginning was worth it!

Signs your baby is getting enough milk

- Your baby is deeply attached and you are comfortable while feeding
- Your baby breastfeeds with steady sucking and swallowing
- Your breasts soften during a feeding
- Your baby is content after a feeding
- Your baby's pees and poops are consistent with the information given to you at the birthing facility
- Your baby's stools change from greenish-black to pale yellow, soft, and seedy looking over the first week (when you are feeding only human milk)
- Your baby's weight is normal and healthy, according to a lactation or other healthcare professional



It is common for babies to lose weight in the first week of life. They should regain their birth weight by 10–14 days of life.

When to call your baby's provider

- Your baby eats less than 8 times in 24 hours
- Your baby is too sleepy to wake for feeds
- Feeding your baby is painful
- Your baby never seems satisfied
- Feedings last longer than one hour
- Your chest area is hard, tight, and painful (engorged)
- Your baby has problems latching or staying attached
- Your baby has not regained their birth weight by 2 weeks of age
- You are not confident your baby is feeding well

