Breast Feedin

Breast Feeding –
Increasing Milk Supply

The best way to increase your milk supply depends upon breast stimulation. You can put your baby to the breast for more feedings and/or express milk using a breast pump. Breast stimulation helps increase levels of the hormone prolactin. Prolactin is known as the "milk hormone" and helps initiate and increase your milk supply.

If your baby is willing or able to suckle at the breast:

- Put your baby to the breast frequently for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours. This will be at least 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- Putting your baby to breast at night is especially helpful. The milk-producing hormone, prolactin, is increased at this time.
- Pumping for 5 to 10 minutes after your baby nurses will also put more demand on your body to produce milk.

If your baby is currently not breast feeding and you are pumping:

Hold your baby skin to skin on your bare chest and offer the breast any time the baby shows interest in sucking. Stimulate your breast by using a high quality double set-up, electrical breast pump. Pump every 3 hours for 10 to 15 minutes (even at night).

Other techniques to use:

- Apply a warm, wet washcloth or towel to your breasts or take a warm shower before feeding or pumping.
- Massage your breasts before and during feeding.
- Use relaxation techniques while feeding or pumping. Find a quiet place to nurse your baby or to pump. Try deep breathing or imagine a pleasant place or milk flowing to your baby. Play quiet music or relaxing music while feeding or pumping.
- Eat a good, nutritious diet. Follow a daily food guide for breast feeding women. (See "Breast Feeding – Diet for Mom" CARE CARD.)
- Drink water or other fluids to satisfy your thirst.
- Keep a record of feedings to monitor your progress.

Things that can reduce breast milk production include:

- Stress
- Birth control pills, patches or shot
- Water pills
- Cigarettes
- Losing weight too fast may decrease your milk supply. Your weight loss should be no more than 2 to 4 pounds each month.

Call the Lactation Management Program Help Line at (816) 346-1309 if:

- You do not see an increase in your milk production in 4 to 7 days.
- You feel your baby may not be getting enough breast milk.
- You have questions of concerns.