

Breast Feeding - Increasing Milk supply

The best way to increase your milk supply is by increasing 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.

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 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/pumpings to monitor your progress.

See the back side of this sheet for additional information!

Things that can reduce breast milk production: →

- Stress
- Birth control pills, patches or shot
- Water pills
- Cigarettes
- Hormonal conditions such as poly cystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and high or low thyroid levels
- History of breast surgery or trauma
- Losing weight too fast may decrease your milk supply. Your weight loss should be no more than 2 to 4 pounds each month.

Call your breast feeding specialist 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.

Call the Children's Mercy Hospital Lactation Management Program Help Line at (816) 346-1309 if you have questions or concerns.