

Breast Milk: The First Year

Breast milk is available at birth. Feed as often as baby is willing to eat.

Day 2-3 Your milk volume is already starting to increase though it may not be noticeable yet. Breastfeed frequently to increase the milk supply more quickly and to help make more milk later.

Day 3-5 Your breasts start to make noticeably larger milk volumes. A rapid increase in breast size, heaviness, and firmness is often described as the milk 'coming in'. Much of this fullness is water and nutrients being drawn to the breasts as they start making larger volumes of milk.

- Frequent breastfeeding now can help prevent the breasts from getting overly firm and painful (engorgement).
- Frequent breastfeeding will not cause you to have 'too much milk'. Let the baby finish feeding on the first breast before offering the other breast.
- You will know baby is getting enough milk if she or he is having wet and dirty diapers and gaining weight.

2 weeks to 1 month Your breasts will start to feel softer between feedings yet are making more milk than in the first week or two.

- The milk volume continues to increase in response to a newborn's frequent feedings. Continuing to breastfeed often and at night builds the milk supply.
- Breastfeeding at least 8-12 times per 24 hours in the early weeks builds a full milk supply.

1 – 6 months

- Babies may nurse more on some days than others. Nursing at the breast builds milk best. If you are concerned about your supply, or how often baby is nursing, increase feeding at the breast and ask to have your baby weighed.
- After the first six weeks or so, some babies may start to reduce feedings to 6-8 times per day yet continue to gain weight well.
- Night feedings remain important to help you maintain a full milk supply.

6 – 12 months and beyond

- Once baby starts eating solid foods around 6 months, breast milk is still the best beverage. It continues to provide important immune protection and excellent nutrition for as long as mother and baby choose to breastfeed.
- Babies continue to breastfeed often as solid foods are added to their diet.
- Continuing to breastfeed often maintains your milk supply through the first year and beyond.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your lactation consultant or health care professional.

Washington County Breastfeeding Coalition

<http://www.livinghealthywc.org/Breastfeeding.html>

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