

# Is My Baby Getting Enough Breast Milk?

A new mother's biggest concern is about how much and how often her baby should breastfeed. Here are some guidelines to help you know if your baby is getting enough breast milk with each breastfeeding session.

## Feeding Cues

Your newborn baby should breastfeed 8 to 12 times within 24 hours. Tune into your baby's early feeding cues.

- ♥ Nuzzling and open mouth movements
- ♥ Tense appearance
- ♥ Grunting or other sounds
- ♥ Kicking and waving of arms
- ♥ Hand-to-mouth activity
- ♥ Crying

Some feedings may be close together, perhaps every hour or so. These are called "cluster feedings." Other feedings will be less frequent, every 2 to 3 hours. Feedings do not need to be evenly spaced and often are not with newborn babies. Wake your baby if he doesn't awaken to feed within 3 hours of the last feeding during the day. Nighttime feedings can be less frequent but should still take place.

If your baby nurses very frequently around the clock, he may not be nursing effectively, thereby getting hungry again quickly. Review the signs of a good latch-on below. Contact a Board Certified Lactation Consultant or other knowledgeable health care provider for more advice.

## Signs of a Good Latch-On

- ♥ The angle of your baby's lips while at your breast is greater than 140 degrees.
- ♥ Most of your areola is in your baby's mouth (1 - 1½" from the base of your nipple, more near your baby's lower lip).
- ♥ Both upper and lower lips are flanged (rolled out).
- ♥ You feel a deep pulling sensation as your baby breastfeeds. It should not be a sharp pain or last more than a moment following the latch-on.
- ♥ Listen for swallowing every 3 to 5 sucks.

## Infant Output Guidelines

Count the number of wet diapers and stools that your baby has after your third or fourth day of breastfeeding. Six to eight wet diapers per day with pale yellow urine indicates an adequate intake. Your baby should also have several stools per day. Older babies may urinate and stool less. However, the urine should always be a light yellow color and the stool should be soft.

## Example

Day 1	1 wet diaper	1 meconium stool (black, tarry)
Day 2	2 wet diapers	1 meconium stool (black, tarry)
Day 3	3 wet diapers	2-3 transitional stools (greenish)
Day 4	4 wet diapers	3-4 yellow stools
Day 5-6+	6 wet diapers	3-4 yellow stools

Babies generally lose a little weight (up to 10% of their birth weight) during the first several days after birth and then begin to regain weight. Babies generally regain their birth weight within 2 weeks of birth. This is a standard pattern. Have your baby's weight checked a couple of times during the first 2 weeks, especially if you are concerned that your baby is not consuming enough of your breast milk. A check of his weight is the only reliable way to determine adequate intake.

## You need to see your baby's health care provider or a Board Certified Lactation Consultant if:

1. Your baby loses more than 10% of his birth weight, or
2. Your baby has not begun to regain weight by his fifth day after birth, or
3. Your baby has not regained his birth weight by two weeks, or
4. Your baby is not urinating at least 6 to 8 times per day at five to six days old, or
5. Your baby is not having several stools per day after the fourth day of breastfeeding.

These signs can indicate inadequate feedings and can become a serious concern if not corrected quickly. You may wish to keep a written record of when your baby urinates, stools and feeds for several days so you can accurately report this to your baby's health care provider. Please seek help if your problem does not resolve quickly.

## Signs of a Good Feeding

- ♥ Hearing swallowing
- ♥ Your breasts are softer after feedings
- ♥ 6 to 8 wet diapers per day by Day 5 or Day 6
- ♥ Feeling a strong, deep, "pulling", suckling at your breasts
- ♥ Seeing milk in your baby's mouth
- ♥ Leaking from your other breast or feeling a "let-down"
- ♥ 15 to 20 minutes of vigorous suckling on each breast or 20 to 30 minutes on one breast

## Signs That Your Baby is Full

- ♥ Drowsiness, sleepiness, difficulty arousing baby
- ♥ Baby releases from your breast spontaneously
- ♥ Relaxed appearance
- ♥ Limp arms and hands

## Does Your Baby Need a Bottle?

Avoid bottle nipples for about the first 4 to 6 weeks of breastfeeding. There may be special situations that warrant giving your baby a supplemental feeding of infant formula, but there aren't many. If your health care provider recommends a supplemental feeding, it can be given in several ways other than with a bottle nipple. Small cups, spoons, eye droppers or specialized syringes can be used very successfully with newborns. Most babies who are given unlimited access to the breast do not need extra feedings.

If giving supplemental feedings become medically necessary, you will probably also need to use a hospital grade breast pump such as the Ameda Elite or Ameda Lact-e to establish or maintain your milk supply. Consult with a Board Certified Lactation Consultant or other knowledgeable health care provider about your situation.

## The Dangers of Casual Supplementation

Giving an occasional bottle may seem harmless, but during the first 4-6 weeks of breastfeeding, it can create more problems than it solves. Consider these possible issues and decide if there is a better option.

- ♥ Nipple confusion
- ♥ Engorgement (short term)
- ♥ Reduced Milk Supply (long term)
- ♥ Sore Nipples
- ♥ Shortened duration of breastfeeding
- ♥ Incorrect sucking patterns and ineffective suckling
- ♥ Exposure to potential allergens in formula

*Please remember that this is general breastfeeding information only and does not replace the advice of your health care provider. If you have a problem that you are unable to resolve quickly, seek help immediately.*

Written by: Vergie Hughes, RN, MS, IBCLC  
Edited by: Anne P. Mark, BSN, RN, IBCLC  
References on File.

# Ameda

Choose Purity. Choose Ameda