

How to Know Your Healthy Full – Term Breast-Fed Baby is Getting Enough Milk

- Your baby may have only one or two wet diapers during the first day or two after birth. Beginning about the third or fourth day, your baby will have at least six to eight really wet cloth diapers (five to six disposable).
- Your baby will pass meconium, the greenish – black, tarry first stool, over the first day or two. Baby will begin having at least two or five bowel movements a day beginning about the third day after birth.
- Your baby may lose up to seven percent of his/her birth weight during the first three or four days. Once your milk supply becomes more plentiful on the third or fourth day, expect your baby begin gaining at least four to eight ounces (113 to 227 grams) per week at least a pound (454 grams a month) be sure to count weight gain from lowest weight, not from birth weight.
- Your baby will nurse frequently, often every one and one-half to three hours, averaging about eight to twelve times a day.
- Your baby will appear healthy, his color will be good, his skin will be firm, he will be filling out and growing in length and head circumference, and he will be alert and active.



IF YOU NEED TO INCREASE YOUR MILK SUPPLY

Get help. If your baby is not gaining well, or is losing weight, keep in close touch with baby's doctor. In many cases, improved breast-feeding techniques will quickly resolve the situation, but in some cases, slow weight gain may indicate a serious health problem.

Nurse frequently for as long as your baby will nurse. A sleepy baby may need to be awakened and encouraged to nurse more frequently.

Offer both breasts at each feeding. This will ensure that your baby gets all the milk available and that both breasts are stimulated frequently. Be sure that baby is positioned correctly at the breast. Baby's lips should be on the areola (dark area surrounding the nipple), well behind the nipple. If you are not sure baby is sucking well, or feel any soreness, ask your health care provider or other breast-feeding specialist to help you.

Try switch nursing. Switching breast two or three times during each feeding will help to keep your baby interested in nursing. Switch breasts as soon as baby's sucking slows down and he swallows less often. Your milk supply will be stimulated by using both breasts at least twice at each feeding.

Give your baby only human milk. If your baby has been receiving formula supplements, do not cut these out abruptly. Gradually cut back on the amount of supplements as your milk supply increases, but watch baby's wet and soiled diapers to be sure he is getting enough milk. Stay in touch with your baby's doctor.

All your baby's sucking should be at the breast. If some supplement is necessary, temporarily, it can be given by spoon, cup, or with a nursing supplement, a device used to feed baby additional milk through a small tube while he nurses at the breast.

Pay attention to your need for rest, relaxation, proper diet, and sufficient fluids. Taking care of yourself will aid increasing your milk supply and improving your general sense of wellbeing.

If you have any further questions or concerns be sure to get in touch with your doctor or breast-feeding specialist. Remember that a baby who is not gaining weight will need to be checked regularly by a doctor.

NURSING POSITIONS

The Cradle Position

This position can be used when you are sitting in bed or in a chair. When sitting up in a bed, be sure to prop pillows behind your back for support. If you decide to use a chair, choose one that has a back high enough to support you comfortably. A footstool may be helpful to raise a leg in a supportive position. You don't want to have a lean over to feed or look at your baby. Cradle your baby's body in one arm, head resting in the bend of your elbow. The arm that is holding your baby should be supporting your baby's back and buttocks. A pillow across your lap may also be helpful to support your arm and baby.

The Football Hold

For this position, you'll need a pillow. After you are comfortably seated in a chair or sitting up in bed, place the pillow along your side under your arm on the side you plan to nurse. Place the baby on the pillow with his legs towards your back and his head toward your midline. Cradling his head in your hand, bring him close to the breast. Your arm should support his upper back. With your other hand, support your breast, fingers below the nipple and thumb above. After the baby has begun rooting =, firmly pull him close to latch on.

Lying-Down Position

If you are more comfortable lying down while breast feeding, lie on your side using a pillow for support. Place your baby in a side-lying position with his mouth parallel to your nipple, and his feet toward the foot of the bed. With the baby's head near your breast, lift your breast upward with your fingers and lift it to your baby's mouth. This position works best when you need to rest or when you need to stay in bed after Cesarean delivery.

Reminder: A newborn can only breath through his nose so be sure not to block his airway. As your breast feed, your baby's nose will be close to or just touching your breast. If the nostrils are blocked, reposition your baby. You may even need to support your breasts during feedings for the first several weeks until your baby is stronger and more efficient at sucking.