

Increasing your milk supply



What is low milk supply?

The breast works on a supply and demand system. The more the baby breastfeeds the more milk is supplied. Low milk supply happens when there is not enough breast milk to meet your baby's needs.

If your supply of breast milk is not meeting your baby's needs, which can be improved by more frequent removal of milk, by increasing feeds and/or expressing milk, with support from a health professional.

How do I know if my milk supply is low?

Signs that your baby is not getting enough milk may include:

- Being unsettled between most feeds
- Being sleepy at the breast even though they are hungry – they appear too tired to breastfeed
- Less than 6–8-soaked cloth nappies or 4-6 heavy disposal nappies in a 24-hour period
- Slow or no weight gain. Refer to 'What to expect from my baby' factsheet
- Fussing at breast when feeding

Why would I have low milk supply?

There can be any number of causes for a low milk supply. Some of the more common reasons include:

- Poor baby attachment to your breast
- Infrequent, short, or interrupted breastfeeds
- Ineffective sucking (i.e. tongue tie, prematurity, anatomical anomalies, pain)
- Complications of birth
- Replacement of any feeds with formula or a dummy (pacifier) as they can alter the number of breast feeds/ day, reducing breast stimulation and milk production
- Early introduction of solids
- Smoking
- You may be tired, anxious or dehydrated



Breastfeeding and your baby



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- Hormonal changes (i.e. ovulation, menstruation, pregnancy, oral contraceptives with estrogen)
- Side effects of medication
- Breast surgery

How can I increase my milk supply?

- Feed your baby regularly whenever they demand a feed. (Most newborns will need feeds every 2 to 3 hours around the clock)
- Have lots of 'skin to skin' time with your baby
- Ensure your baby is attached correctly. Refer to 'Positioning and Attachment' factsheet
- Increase breast stimulation by offering both breasts twice at each feed (switch feeding) and/or expressing after each feed. A combination of hand and pump expressing can be more effective
- Massage your breasts gently before and during feeding and expressing
- Rest when you can, enjoy nutritious food and drink enough water to you thirst
- Your GP or other endorsed health professional may prescribe a medication/ supplement to help increase milk supply
- Herbal supplements have been used traditionally, to increase milk supply. These should only be used under the supervision of a health professional
- Consult with Maternal and Child Health for support through the breastfeeding support clinics, or a private practitioner, such as a Lactation Consultant, for additional help.



How can I find more information?

Phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal and Child Health - Early Pregnancy and Parenting support line (02) 5124 1775, or• Central Health Intake (CHI) on (02) 5124 9977
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Breastfeeding Association - 1800 686 268 www.breastfeeding.asn.au• Pregnancy Birth and Baby - 1800 882 436 www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au• www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding
Visit	Your GP or Walk in Centre

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Acknowledgement of Country




Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. Canberra Health Services respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. Canberra Health Services also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.



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