

Weeks Two through Six

How often should baby be nursing?

Frequent nursing in the early weeks is important for establishing a good milk supply. Most newborns need to nurse at least 8 – 12 times per 24 hours **OR MORE**.

You **CAN'T** nurse too often—you **CAN** nurse too little.

Nurse at the first signs of hunger (stirring, rooting, hands in mouth)—don't wait until baby is crying. Allow baby unlimited time at the breast when sucking actively, then offer the second breast. Some newborns are excessively sleepy—wake baby to nurse if 2 hours (during the day) or 4 hours (at night) have passed without nursing. Once baby has established a good weight gain pattern, you can stop waking baby and nurse on baby's cues alone.

The following things are normal:

- Frequent and/or long feedings.
- Varying nursing pattern from day to day.
- Cluster nursing (very frequent to constant nursing) for several hours—usually evenings—each day. This may coincide with the normal “fussy time” that most babies have in the early months.
- Growth spurts, where baby nurses more often than usual for several days and may act very fussy. Common growth spurt times in the early weeks are the first few days at home, 7 – 10 days, 2 – 3 weeks and 4 – 6 weeks.

Is baby getting enough milk?

- **Weight gain:** The average breastfed newborn gains 6 ounces/week (170 grams/week). Consult with baby's doctor and your lactation consultant if baby is not gaining as expected.
- **Dirty diapers:** Expect 3-4+ stools daily that are the size of a US quarter (2.5 cm) or larger. Some babies stool every time they nurse, or even more often—this is normal, too. The normal stool of a breastfed baby is yellow and loose (soft to runny) and may be seedy or curdy. After 4 – 6 weeks, some babies stool less frequently, with stools as infrequent as one every 7-10 days. As long as baby is gaining well, this is normal.
- **Wet diapers:** Expect 5-6+ wet diapers every 24 hours. To feel what a sufficiently wet diaper is like, pour 3 tablespoons (45 mL) of water into a clean diaper. A piece of tissue in a disposable diaper will help you determine if the diaper is wet. After 6 weeks, wet diapers may drop to 4-5/day but amount of urine will increase to 4-6+ tablespoons (60-90+ mL) as baby's bladder capacity grows.

Milk Supply?

Some moms worry about milk supply.

As long as baby is gaining well on mom's milk alone, milk supply is good.

Between weight checks, other signs of good milk supply include:

- Audible swallowing
- Gaining weight (after 3-5 days of life)
- Sufficient number of wet and dirty diapers
- Milk is visible in baby's mouth
- Breasts are softer after feeding
- Baby is satisfied after eating (relaxed, palms open)

