

There is no evidence to show that eating any particular foods, drinking any special drinks or resting more will make you make more milk.

You only need to eat and drink according to your body's hunger and thirst signals. Try to fit in whatever sleep/rest periods you can manage, while feeding/expressing/visiting your baby if on NNU and spending time with the rest of your family.

Sometimes mums are recommended something like 'Tiger milk' to increase their milk supply. This is a smoothie-like concoction of full cream milk, bananas and Brewer's yeast tablets. **There is no evidence that such a recipe will make you produce more milk, although there may be a placebo effect for some mums when they take it.** Also, if your baby's feeds are very frequent or prolonged, you may be eating and drinking very little and may feel hungry and tired so the 'Tiger milk' may give you a fluid and calorie boost, but it does not directly improve your milk supply.

Any questions?

Please speak to the Infant Feeding Co-ordinators:

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RCHT 851

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Revised 05/2020 V3 Review due 05/2023

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Increasing your breast milk supply



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About this leaflet

Concern about lack of milk is one of the three main reasons why mothers give up breastfeeding in the early weeks. This lack may be perceived or real.

Perceived lack of milk – you may believe that you do not have enough milk or that your milk is not good enough. This can happen if your baby feeds more frequently than you expect. For example, your baby may feed very frequently (perhaps every 2 hours), which is very common in the early weeks but you had expected the baby to feed 4 hourly. Please be reassured that as long as your baby is feeding frequently enough and effectively, you will produce enough milk and that your milk will always be of the right quality for your baby.

Genuine lack of milk – you may really not be producing enough milk. The two main reasons for this are:

- poor positioning and attachment at the breast
- not feeding frequently enough.

In either or both of these situations, milk is not being adequately removed from your breasts, and so your breasts respond by gradually reducing the amount of milk that is made. Sometimes this happens in the first hours or days after birth and before you begin to notice an effect on your baby, for example slow weight gain or infrequent wet and dirty nappies.

How do I increase my milk supply?

The most important thing to remember is that milk is made on a supply and demand basis, so to increase the amount of milk being produced, you must increase the amount of milk being removed from your breasts.

1. **Improve positioning and attachment**, so that it is as good as possible and your baby is feeding effectively. Seek help from your midwife, maternity support worker, health visiting team and local breastfeeding peer support group.
2. Make sure that your baby is being fed **at least 8 times in every 24 hours, including at least once at night**. Wake and stimulate your baby for extra feeds if he/she is sleepy and not asking for feeds. This may be particularly important if baby is using a dummy, as this may otherwise 'mask' feeding cues.

3. **Offer your baby both breasts at every feed**, to ensure your baby gets as much milk as possible and you get as much stimulation as possible. This means feeding your baby on one side until he lets go spontaneously and then, if he is still awake and interested, offering the other breast for him to feed from for as long as he wants too.
4. **Feed at least once at night** – night time breastfeeds make more milk. Your prolactin (the milk production hormone) levels are higher at night, so night time feeds are especially effective at increasing your supply for the coming day.
5. Spend as much time as possible **skin to skin with your baby**.
6. **Express milk if your baby is not feeding effectively** at the breast, so that your breastmilk is removed properly. This will stimulate more milk to be made.

For the vast majority of mums, taking steps 1-6 above will be very effective at increasing your milk supply. For a very small minority of women, there are herbal supplements and drug treatments that can be prescribed to increase milk supply, but these should only be used **in addition** to steps 1-6 and will not be effective at sustaining an improved milk supply unless these other basic measures are also taken. Please discuss this with your midwife, health visitor, NNU staff or GP if you feel this may apply to you.

Extra tips for increasing milk supply if your baby is on NNU

- Express beside baby during or after kangaroo care.
- Wear a muslin or baby blanket between your breasts inside your clothes and keep swapping it with a similar muslin/blanket which your baby lies on. Breathe the smell of your baby from the muslin/blanket while you massage or express to help trigger your milk production (and your baby can breathe the smell of you too, which is reassuring and calming when you are not there!)
- Try switching sides and massaging your breasts more often.
- Increase the frequency of expressing to 8-10 times per day for 24-48 hours.
- Try changing the method of expressing eg single to double pumping or vice versa, or back to hand expressing.
- Don't forget, night time expressing helps make more milk.