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Mother and child care

You have what it takes to give your baby the best start in life

Many pregnant women aim to follow the World Health Organization's advice and breastfeed their babies for 6 months[1]. However, many only breastfeed for a few weeks, and up to 60% of women stop earlier than they intend to[2,3].

Concern about not producing enough milk is a key reason that nearly 50% of mothers state for giving up breastfeeding within 8 months[2,4]. Feeling calm and relaxed whilst breastfeeding can help.

Common misconceptions about signs of low milk production

Many signs attributed to low milk supply are normal and related to breastfeeding physiology, as shown in the table on the next page[5,6]. If you are exclusively breastfeeding your baby and they continue to gain weight, you can be assured that you are producing sufficient milk[5].

#relax4moremilk

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Common misconceptions of low milk supply	Why this might be happening[5,6]
Breasts feel softer	After the first few weeks of breastfeeding your breasts may not feel as full as they were because they will have adjusted to the individual needs of your baby
Shorter duration of feeds	As babies develop, they become more efficient at breastfeeding, so feeds typically become shorter
Baby is unsettled	Full-term babies often show a slight increase in crying that begins at about 2 weeks of age, peaks at approximately 6 weeks and then gradually decreases over the next 6 weeks
Baby coming off the breast during feeding	At around 4 months, babies become increasingly curious and interested in the world around them, which may cause them to be distracted and interrupt feeding

Tips to help:

- Ensure your baby is well positioned and latches on to the breast well[5,7]

- Frequent feedings help to stimulate your milk production, and this is especially important during the first few weeks[5]

- If you have had a caesarean section, your milk production can be delayed or you may find it uncomfortable to breastfeed. Use pillows to make breastfeeding comfortable, and use pain medication as advised by your doctor or midwife[8]

- Consider expressing milk after feeds, which you can use to offer to your baby for their next feed[5]

- Offer both breasts at each feed; your baby may initially be satisfied with one breast, but they may need both in subsequent weeks as they grow[5]

- Find a calm, relaxing space with a home-like atmosphere in which to breastfeed, or express milk,[7] as breastmilk volume has been closely linked to psychological well-being and stress levels[9,10]

  - Try 10–15 minutes of breathing exercises, or listening to music, prior to breastfeeding[11,12]

If you have any concerns about your milk supply, or other aspects of breastfeeding, seek support and advice from your healthcare professional.

References: 1. World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund. http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global_strategy/en/. Published 2002; accessed July 2016; 2. De Jager M, et al. *Eur Obstet Gyn Suppl* 2012:25–30; 3. Odom EC, et al. *Pediatrics* 2013;131:e726; 4. Li R, et al. *Pediatrics* 2008;12:S69–S76; 5. Amir LH. *Australian Family Physician* 2006;35;686–689; 6. Tedder J. *J Perinat Ed* 2015;24:239–248; 7. Hauck YL, et al. *Int Breastfeed J* 2008;3:20; 8. Ask Dr. Sears. http://www.askdrsears.com/topics/feeding-eating/breastfeeding/rightstart-techniques/breastfeeding-after-cesarean-section; accessed July 2016; 9. Yu RJ, et al. Philips Research Shanghai, 2012; 10. Ueda T, et al. *Obstet Gynecol* 1994;84:259–262; 11. Philips Avent Relaxation Study. Data on file; 12. Keith DR, et al. *Adv Neonatal Care* 2012;12:112–119.

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