

# Making Enough Milk

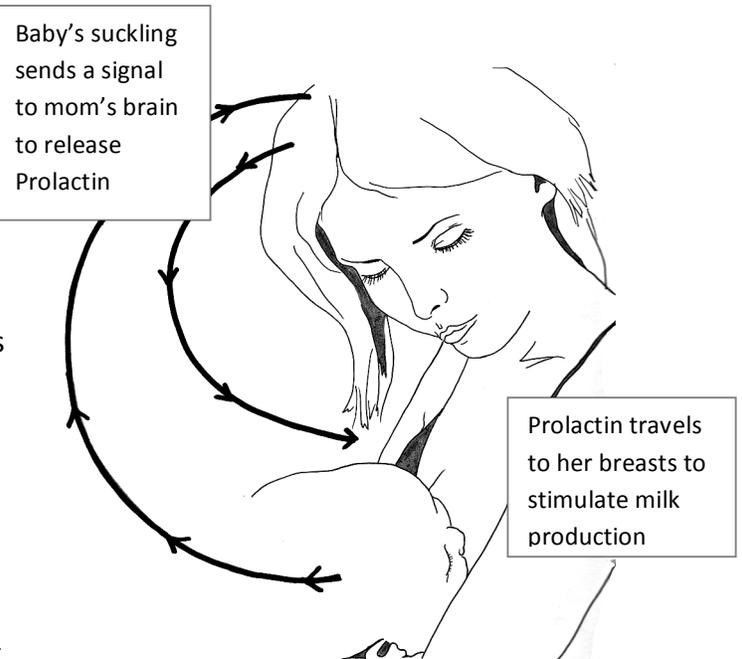
*“Can I do it?”...Yes, you can! And here’s how.*

Many mothers are concerned about whether they will make enough milk for their baby. It can help to know how your body works to produce milk and how it will regulate your milk supply.

## Making lots of milk:

There are two ways that work together to make your body produce lots of milk.

- 1) Hormones. Hormones are especially important in the first days and first few weeks of breastfeeding, to get your body to make abundant milk. When your baby suckles, this will send a signal to your brain to release the hormones Prolactin and Oxytocin. Prolactin travels back to the breasts and finishes off your “milk-making factory”. The more your baby suckles, especially in the first week, the more Prolactin reaches your breasts and the better the “milk-making factory” will be. The other hormone, Oxytocin, is responsible for squeezing the milk ducts so that the milk makes its way to the nipple and to your baby.



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- 2) Emptying. Your breasts know to make more milk when they are **emptied**. There is a substance in your milk called “inhibiting factor”, that slows down milk production when milk stays in your breast too long. The more your baby nurses, the more quickly the inhibiting factor is removed from your breasts. Then your breasts make more milk. For this reason, long gaps between feeds will slow down milk production, and more frequent feeds will speed it up. This is the way that milk production is controlled over the long term. The more your baby eats, the more milk you will make.

### **During pregnancy your breasts get ready.**

During your pregnancy, hormones will prepare your breasts for breastfeeding. You may notice changes in the size of your breasts and size and color of the nipples and areolas. And in your third trimester, your breasts will start to make the first milk, colostrum.

### **When your baby is born.**

Your body is designed to make lots of milk. After your baby and placenta are delivered, hormone changes signal to your breasts to start gearing up for full milk production. This will happen about 3-4 days after your baby is born.

In the meantime, your baby will get the colostrum. This special milk helps the baby's immune system and protects his immature gut...shielding him from infection and allergies. You will make only a small quantity, about 1 oz on his first day of life and a few ounces on Day 2. This is just the right amount for your baby's small stomach.

After 2 to 3 days you will notice changes in your breasts as they start to produce much larger quantities of mature milk. They will feel warmer, heavier, and fuller. Sometimes they can feel uncomfortably full. Remember to feed your baby frequently at this time as this will help. The over-fullness will go away in a day or two.

Your baby's stomach size and appetite will continue to grow so your breasts will make 15 to 20 ounces per day by Days 4 and 5, to meet his increasing needs.

At first, your body will make more milk than your baby needs. This will settle down by 4 weeks or so, and you will make just the right amount. Your breasts will not feel as full, but as long as your baby is gaining weight, you will be making the right amount for him.

### **Your body is designed to make lots of milk for your baby.**

Babies work with their mothers to regulate milk production. They are born with instinctive behaviors to help them learn to nurse and to feed frequently so that their mothers will produce all the milk they need. You will be a breastfeeding team. Limiting the number of feeds, by watching the clock rather than watching your baby's feeding cues, interferes with this teamwork and will reduce the amount of milk you make. So trust your body and trust your baby. Keep him close and feed him whenever he shows signs that he is ready to eat. And then you *will* make all the milk that he needs.