Making Sure Your Baby is Getting Enough Milk

I'm breastfeeding my baby. How can I tell if she's getting enough milk?

There are several ways you can tell whether your baby is getting enough milk. They include the following things:

- Your baby has frequent wet and dirty diapers (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/diapers-clothing/Pages/Changing-Diapers.aspx).
- Your baby appears satisfied after feeding.
- Milk is visible during feedings (leaking or dripping).
- Your baby is gaining weight (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Tracking-Your-Baby's-Weight-and-Measurements.aspx) after the first 4 to 5 days of life.

Wet & Dirty Diapers

Your baby should have several wet or dirty diapers each day for the first few days after delivery (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/womens-health/Pages/default.aspx). Beginning around the time that your milk comes in, the wet diapers should increase to 6 or more per day. At the same time, stools should start turning green, then yellow. There should be 3 or more stools per 24 hours. Typically, once breastfeeding is going well, breastfed babies have a yellow stool during or after each feeding. As your baby gets older, stools may occur less often, and after a month, may even skip a number of days. If stools are soft, and your baby is feeding and acting well, this is quite normal.

Feeding Patterns

Your baby's feeding patterns are an important sign that he is feeding enough. If you add up all the feedings (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/How-Often-and-How-Much-Should-Your-Baby-Eat.aspx) over the course of the day, your baby should feed at least 8 to 12 times a day. Remember, newborns feed often and will give cues or signs when they are ready to feed. The length of each feeding varies and your baby will show signs when she is finished.

When feeding well with good latch on (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Ensuring-Proper-Latch-On.aspx), the infant will suckle deeply, you will hear some swallowing, and the feeding won't be painful. The baby should appear satisfied and/or sleep (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Phases-of-Sleep.aspx) until time for the next feeding. If your baby sleeps for stretches of longer than 4 hours in the first 2 weeks, wake him for a feeding. If your baby will not wake enough to eat at least 8 times per day, call your pediatrician.

Weight Gain

Your child will be weighed at each doctor's visit. This is one of the best ways to tell how much milk your baby is getting. The AAP recommends that babies be seen for an office visit (or home visit) between 3 to 5 days of age to check on breastfeeding and baby's weight. During the first week, most infants lose several ounces of weight, but they should be back up to their birth weight by the end of the second week. Once your milk supply (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Milk-Supply.aspx) is established, your baby should gain between ½ and 1 ounce per day during the first 3 months.

Early Signs of Hunger

Your baby starts to let you know when she's hungry by the following early signs or cues: