

NAVIGATING Low Milk Supply



There are many reasons for low supply.
Here are some starting tips to increase your milk supply.
These 3 themes are in order of priority on your journey.



1

FEED THE BABY

SHOULD I STOP BREASTFEEDING?

Not unless you want to.

How to feed is a personal choice. Low supply is not a reason to be told to stop. Many people include their milk in feeding, even if it is not *exclusively* their milk. Your milk still has value, even if it is not the only thing your baby gets.

THEN HOW CAN I FEED? You can:

- Latch them to your body,
- Use a bottle, and/or
- A cup, spoon or other tools with help from feeding support.



LATCH THEN TOP UP?

For some babies, it can be helpful to start with a small top up first to wake or calm them, then latch to your body. This can be great for sleepy or tense babies. Other babies might latch then top up if needed. Use either order that works best for you at that feed.

HOW LONG CAN A FEED TAKE?

Maximum times depending on how you feed:

Chest only	Chest + Bottle	Bottle only
1 hour 30 minutes/side	1 hour total to finish both	30 minutes

This does not include burping or diaper changes.
Your baby should be full & satisfied by the end.

WHAT CAN I USE TO SUPPLEMENT?

- Your own expressed milk
- Pasteurized donor milk [Northern Star Milk Bank](#)
- Infant Formula approved by Health Canada
 - See this link: [Safe Preparation of Infant Formula from Alberta Health Services](#).



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PROTECT THE MILK SUPPLY



5 HOURS IN A ROW WITHOUT
LATCHING OR PUMPING
TELLS YOUR BODY TO
LOWER MILK PRODUCTION.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I STIMULATE MILK?

If you have low supply, your body needs to get the message that you need it to make more milk.

To make more milk, we need to effectively stimulate at least 6 times in 24 hours. One stimulation is either a baby latching well for 10-30 minutes per side or using a pump on both sides for 15-30 minutes. Normal milk stimulation is 8-12 times in 24 hours.

"TRIPLE FEEDING"

(1) Latching your baby to your body, (2) then giving them a top up, (3) then pumping is known as triple feeding. It can be helpful to drain and stimulate milk, but it is also draining on you.

If you are still triple feeding with a healthy term baby at 2 weeks postpartum, consider adjusting and getting help. This will help you keep going while still protecting your milk supply.

Some feeds can be:

- Pumping & bottle only, no latching
- Latching (5+ minutes per side) & topping up, no pumping
- Triple feeds (but limiting it to 2-4 feeds/day)



I NEED MORE HELP!

This is just one handout on a complicated issue. Personal support may be needed. Depending on your concern(s), you might:

3

COMBINE 1 & 2

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Latching is a skill for you and for your baby. If latching to your body is a big challenge that you want to practice, start with latching 3 times per day when you and baby are calm. You can do this at the start, middle or end of a feed.



SWITCH NURSING

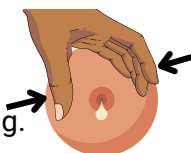


Switch nursing helps empty milk and stimulate more. In switch nursing, babies go back-and-forth more than once in a feed. It should not make your feed last longer than 1 hour.

As your baby feeds on the first side, watch for when their suckling slows or stops, often around 5-15 minutes into feeding. Then unlatch them and switch them to the other side. When they slow down again, bring them back to the first side to feed. Repeat again for second side.

BREAST COMPRESSIONS

Breast compressions help push out more milk during feeding or pumping.



Grasp as much of your breast tissue as possible in your hand. Stay far enough away from baby's latch or your pump piece to avoid losing suction. Gently squeeze your breast and hold for 3-5 seconds then relax. Repeat this for 1-2 minutes or more if helpful.

- See an IBCLC® lactation consultant
- Visit [LLLC.ca](#) or go to a peer-support meeting
- Go to [HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca](#)
- Visit a healthy beginnings nurse
- See your doctor or primary care provider