

# CONTROLLING OVERSUPPLY | HYPERLACTATION

## IS THIS A PROBLEM?

It can be! An oversupply can be normal, especially in the first 1-2 months after birth while your body learns how much milk your baby needs. Hyperlactation is the term used when an oversupply causes issues for the baby and/or the parent. Hyperlactation can happen because of extra milk stimulation (pumping) or other health issues. Its symptoms overlap with other diagnoses, so it should not be overlooked.

### BABY

- Weight gain
  - Irregular, may be too high or even too low
- Upset stomach or digestion
  - Spitting up, explosive poops, gassiness
- Temperament
  - Fussy during & after feeds

### PARENT

- Nipple concerns
  - Pain, damage, blisters or blebs
- Breast concerns
  - Repeat mastitis, frequent swelling or engorgement, pain, and/or abscess

### FEEDING CHALLENGES

- Shallow latch, frequent and short feeds, refusing to latch, coughing/sputtering while feeding

-POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS-

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## THINGS TO REMEMBER WITH OVERSUPPLY

### 1. Postpartum stage matters

- **0-6 weeks:** Oversupply can be normal and exclusively breast/chestfed babies start drinking their maximum daily milk volumes in this time.
- **6+ weeks:** If you still have too much, you may need to actively and carefully bring down oversupply because now we have a good idea of your baby's milk needs.

### 2. Feed the baby, not the freezer

- Extra pumping tells your body to make more milk. It makes oversupply worse.

### 3. Check in often

- If you are bringing down your milk supply, check your baby's weight every 1-3 weeks on an infant-sensitive scale, like at a health unit, until your supply is stable.
- Follow up with trained help who know how to guide oversupply, see "Questions" below.

## HOW DO I MANAGE AN OVERSUPPLY?

### ANY TIME, INCLUDING FIRST 6 WEEKS

#### Managing discomfort & full breasts

See [our handout on Engorgement](#) for suggestions.

#### Lean back a little or a lot

Babies are better at latching & swallowing when laying on their stomach. Leaning back may slow your milk flow.

#### Reduce/stop unnecessary pumping

If you are engorged, do not pump off milk to help with latching. See [our engorgement handout](#) for tips, like using reverse pressure softening. If the engorgement advice is not enough, hand express or pump for 1-2 minutes at a time, just until you are comfortable. Do not use silicone pumps, especially during feeds.

#### Follow your baby's cues

If you have oversupply and your baby has regained their birth weight, follow your baby's hunger cues to see if they finish a feed on 1 side or if they need to feed on both sides. Check their weight every 1 to 3 weeks. Continue to count their daily pees and poos.

### OVER 6 WEEKS POSTPARTUM

#### Consider a trial of block feeding for 3-5 days

With block feeding, your baby can feed as often as they want but you offer the same side for 3-5 hours at a time. Watch your baby's daily pees and poos. After this, switch to let baby guide their feedings.

#### Herbs or medications that can bring down production

These options, (like a combined oral contraception), should be discussed with your doctor/a prescribing provider to ensure they are ok for your use.

### Questions?

Depending on your concern, you can:

- See an IBCLC® lactation consultant
- Check out a peer-support group (like LLLC.ca)
- Go to [HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca](https://HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca)
- Visit your doctor or primary care provider
- Call 811



*This handout was created by the Department of Family Medicine and is provided as an educational tool. It is not intended to replace medical advice. Always consult a healthcare provider for any questions about your health. For breastfeeding or lactation, this may include an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®).*