

Fact Sheet

Breastfeeding: How your breasts make milk

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Colostrum.

Colostrum is the first milk made in the breast during pregnancy. Colostrum is highly nutritious for your baby and:

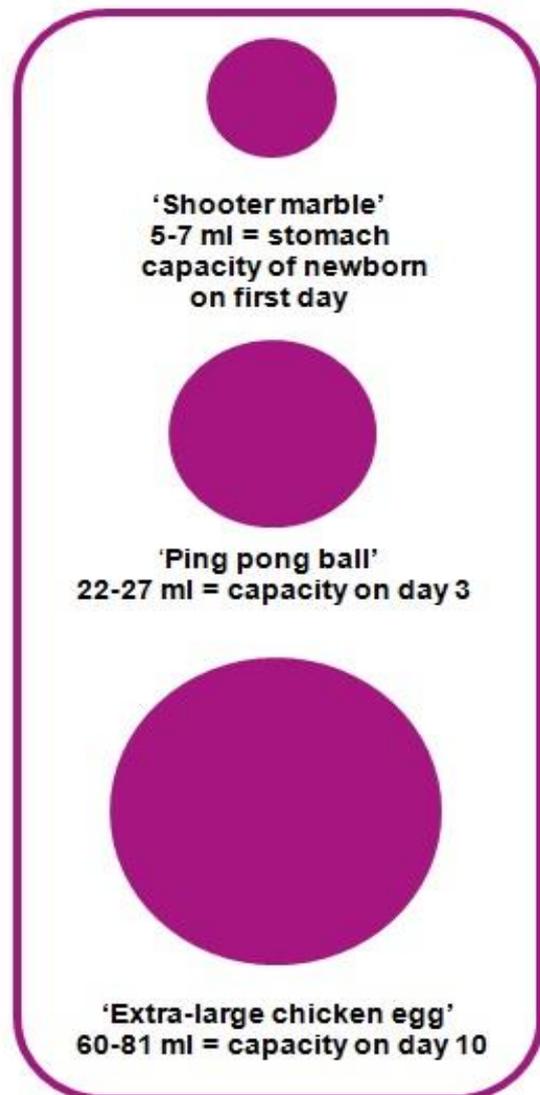
- helps to protect your baby against infections and allergies
- may be clear to yellow or orange in colour
- is made in small amounts- a few drops or as much as 5 to 20 mls
- satisfies your baby's hunger and thirst
- is a natural laxative to help with your baby's first bowel motion
- reduces the chance of baby developing jaundice

When the milk 'comes in'.

- breast milk normally starts to 'come in' by three to five days
- the colour of your breast milk can change from a whitish blue colour (watery) to a creamy colour throughout the feed. This is because the amount of fat increases throughout the feed
- your breasts may become firm and lumpy during this time. It is important to feed baby regularly and change baby's feeding position
- gently massaging the lumps whilst your baby is feeding and using cold compresses and pain relief will minimise your discomfort

How often will my baby want to feed?

Baby's stomach size in the first week



Adapted from Linda J Smith's "Coach's Notebook: Games and Strategies for Lactation Education" Boston Jones and Bartlett, 2002



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It is important for your baby to feed often because:

- your baby's stomach is small
- breast milk digests easily
- babies drink small amounts of breast milk in the early days.

Babies do not understand time!

Healthy term babies are able to regulate their own appetite.

It is not unusual for a baby to feed 8 to 15 times in a 24-hour period.

Your baby cannot be overfed while breastfeeding

When you get home you may notice that some day's baby feeds only 6 to 8 times in the day.

On other days your baby may feed 8 to 15 times a day.

It is important to watch your baby's feeding cues and not the clock

Some tips to build up and maintain your breast milk supply!

- make sure your baby is attached well to your breast
- let your baby feed as often as your baby needs to
- breastfeed your baby throughout the night. This is when your milk-making hormone (prolactin) is higher
- feed your baby for as long as the baby wants from the first breast. Then offer the second breast. Be sure to start the next feed on the second breast
- get plenty of rest or sleep when your baby sleeps. Remember this may only be needed in the early months

- follow your baby's feeding cues. Using dummies may mask these feeding cues and delay feeds. This then may reduce your milk supply
- feed your baby only breast milk in the first 6 months. Giving your baby fluid other than breast milk to drink, for example, infant formula or water) may reduce your milk supply.

Signs baby is feeding well and getting plenty of milk.

Once your milk has come in after 3-5 days, the following are signs that your baby is feeding well:

- baby appears healthy- normal colour, alert and active when awake and is waking for feeds
- 1-2 soft bowel motions (poo's) a day. The bowel motions will change colour from a black/ dark green colour to a yellow (mustard like colour) by day 5 to 7
- 2 to 3 wet nappies a day in the first 3 to 4 days. Once the milk is in and baby is breastfeeding well -at least 5 heavy wet nappies per day of clear urine
- baby is feeding at least 6 times per day, most will feed 8-12 times per day
- baby is putting on weight after the weigh on Day 3 to 4. Most babies are back to their birth weight by 2 weeks of age.

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Watch this introductory video on: Common breastfeeding questions: how often, how long, waking baby.

[[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/breastfeeding_questions_timing_video.html/context/1645]]

(This video answers common questions about breastfeeding. A lactation consultant says that as long as your baby is getting enough milk, it doesn't matter how long or how often baby feeds. She says sleeping with baby in your room can help you catch early feeding cues, so you can feed your baby before crying starts. The video has phone numbers for getting help with breastfeeding.)

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Acknowledgements

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The Raising Children Network invites organisations and individuals to download and add this parenting video to their websites free of charge. The video must not be edited and must appear with the following statement:

Sourced from the Raising Children website, Australia's trusted parenting website. For more parenting information, visit raisingchildren.net.au.

We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service.

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