Increasing Breastmilk Supply

Before working to increase your milk supply, first find out how much you make in a 24-hour period. Use a 24-hour chart or phone app and log your sessions and breastmilk volumes for 2 days. If you find you are making less than you want to be making:

1. Increase your pumping frequency to 8 to 10 times per day.
2. Use the techniques below to increase your supply.

If the techniques below do not improve your supply within 3 to 5 days, talk with a lactation consultant and your healthcare provider about other options.

Breast pumping techniques

Hands-on pumping

Hands-on pumping combines compression of the breasts with your hands and suction of your breasts with the pump:

- Pump both breasts at the same time ("double pump") with a hospital-grade breast pump for 10 minutes. Then pump just one breast while also massaging it. Do this for 5 minutes and then do 5 minutes on the other breast.
- Stop pumping and end the session with gentle massage of each breast. Then hand express any last drops into the funnel-shaped part of the pump (flange).
- Watch the video “Maximizing Milk Production” in the section “Breastfeeding” (http://med.stanford.edu/newborns.html)
- Watch the video “Hand Expressing Milk” in the section “Breastfeeding” (http://med.stanford.edu/newborns.html)
- Read the article “To Pump More Milk, Use Hands On Pumping in the “Expressing Your Milk Section” (https://breastfeedingusa.org)

Power pumping

Power pumping mimics a hungry baby trying to increase your milk supply. Do it 1 time a day when you are relaxed and have some extra time.

- Apply lanolin.
- Massage your breasts, and then pump for 10 minutes.
- Stop pumping and hand express. Rest for 10 minutes.
- Repeat this cycle (pump 10min, rest 10 min)for up to 60 minutes.
- Your pumped volume will not be huge at the end, but you will have provided lots of stimulation that will hopefully result in higher volumes in 3 to 5 days.
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Pump adjustments
Make sure your pump is still working well and you have no pain with pumping.

- Use Lanolin or similar lubricant before pumping.
- Adjust the length of your pumping session. Usually 15 minutes with a hospital-grade pump is enough. Do not pump longer than 30 minutes in 1 session (unless you are doing a Power Pumping session).
- Check the fit of the funnel-shaped part of the pump (flange) that sits on your breast. Ask your nurse for a different size if it feels tight or rubs enough to be uncomfortable. Lactation consultants can also help you find the right size flange.
- Make sure your pump is on highest comfortable setting. You should be able to turn the pressure up from the starting pressure without having any pain. If you can’t (and you are also using lubricant), the flanges might be too small.
- The Symphony pump has a “teardrops” button that changes the speed and pressure of the pump. You can experiment with using this button. During your 15 minutes of pumping, you can push the “teardrops” button, leave it for a few minutes, and then press it again to go back and forth between the 2 settings. Ask your lactation consultant for more information.
- The Symphony pump has an “Initiation Program” that can be used when you are trying to increase supply. Ask your lactation consultant for more information.
- Make sure all the connections are tight between the pump kit pieces and where the tubing meets the pump.
- Consider replacing the thin white membranes that attach to the yellow valve. You should replace if they will not lay flat on the yellow valve, if they look ragged, or if you notice less suction on the pump with no other cause.

Relaxation techniques to try when pumping

- Stress can keep your body from releasing milk. The more you can relax while pumping, the more milk will be released.
- Try guided relaxation or visualization with audio recordings. Listen to relaxing or happy music while pumping.
- Look at photos or videos of your baby while you are pumping.
- Wrap your baby’s blanket around you and think about the way your baby smells.
- Imagine you are holding your baby.
- Watch TV or try another distracting activity.
Be comfortable while pumping
Make sure your body is comfortable when you are pumping.
- Use a hands-free bra. You can buy one, or you can make one out of a jogging bra by cutting small slits in the nipple area.
- Use warm packs in your bra 10 to 15 minutes before pumping.
- Have a snack and some water as you get ready to pump.
- Sit in a comfortable chair with a blanket over your shoulders.
- Make sure you are not too hot or too cold when pumping.
- Address any issues about your pump or nipple care if your breasts or nipples hurt while pumping (see Pump Adjustments section).
- Turn your chair away from the door if interruptions are likely. Ask your nurse to put up a “Check with Nurse before Entering” sign outside your door.
- Cover yourself and your equipment when pumping if it helps you to feel more relaxed and protected.

Hold your baby skin-to-skin
- Hold your baby on your chest with baby’s skin touching yours (skin-to-skin) as often as possible. Ideally, do this type of hold at least 1 hour each day or more, if your baby is able.
- Skin-to-skin time with your baby can decrease your stress, which helps increase the production of the hormone oxytocin in your body. This hormone can help you to produce more milk.
- Skin to skin is very enjoyable for moms and calming for babies.

Pump at night
- Pump at least 1 time at night.
- Do not let more than 5 hours go between pumping sessions.
- Wait for the morning to wash your pumping supplies.

Take care of yourself
- Remember to eat, drink water and rest.
- It is OK to ask for help. Mothers need to be taken care of in the fragile newborn period so they can take care of their newborns.
- Take a walk. Get outside in the sun. Find a space to breathe fresh air for a few minutes. If there is time, try yoga, acupressure or acupuncture.

Release your emotions
Stress negatively impacts your milk supply. Your changing hormones after your baby’s birth are meant to help you release the stress of caring for a new life. It is OK to cry.
Increasing Breastmilk Supply

Breastfeeding Techniques
- Breastfeed 8 to 12 times per day, ideally on demand.
- Enjoy your baby with skin to skin time between or before breastfeeding.
- A deep, painless latch is important to make sure your baby is taking as much milk as possible from your breast. A lactation consultant can help.
- Try a “laid back” or “natural breastfeeding” position to get a deep latch. See http://www.naturalbreastfeeding.com/
- Use breast compression to help your baby get more milk from your breasts. Your lactation consultant can show you how to do this.
- Pump after breastfeeding to remove more milk (up to 15 min of double pumping).
- Pump for every bottle your baby gets as your body only knows how much milk to make based on how often your body is stimulated with breastfeeding or pumping.

Foods and Beverages
- Many cultures believe that certain foods help increase milk production, but the effects of food on breastmilk has not been studied carefully. See the For Further Reading section below for more information.
- Eat foods that are comforting and nourishing to you. Consider continuing to take your prenatal vitamin.
- Have a snack while pumping. This might increase your oxytocin levels, which can help you to release milk when pumping.
- Stay hydrated. Have a glass of water every time you sit down to pump (8 to 12 times per day). Drinking more water than this does not help you make more milk.
- Eat foods naturally high in water, such as fruits and vegetables.
- Alcohol is dehydrating. Studies show that it actually decreases milk supply.

For Further Reading

Books

Websites
- Low Milk Supply: Information and Support for Breastfeeding Mothers
  www.lowmilksupply.org
- Mothers Overcoming Breastfeeding Issues.
  http://www.mobimotherhood.org