

How to Know Your Baby Is Getting Enough Breast Milk

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One of the aspects of nursing that really seems to trouble new parents, as well as friends and relatives who aren't familiar with nursing, is knowing whether your baby is getting enough breast milk.

One Sure Way to Know

When a baby is fed from a bottle, it's easy to know exactly how much he's eating. However, there's really only one way to know exactly how much a breastfed baby has eaten. My husband found this out while burping our son. Rather than emitting a bubble of air, the baby released a torrent of breast milk, leaving my husband sitting in the middle of a small lake. He acknowledged then that it was clear that our baby was getting plenty.

How to Determine Your Baby Is Being Well Nourished

When a baby receives her nourishment from the breast, it's less a matter of how much she's taking in than how well she's being nourished. Weight gain is a good indicator that your baby is nursing well. By two weeks of age, she will most likely have regained her birth weight and will gain, on average, five or more ounces each week after that. If she is not gaining one half to one ounce a day, just nurse every hour for a day or two to increase your milk supply.

Here are signs that your baby is getting enough nourishment at the breast:

- Every 24 hours
 - She nurses eight to 12 times.
 - He has two to five bowel movements.
 - She has six to eight wet cloth diapers or five to six wet disposable diapers (newborns, who are receiving only colostrums in the first few days of life, will only wet one or two diapers)
- He can be heard swallowing while he is nursing.
- She nurses for as long as she wants, spending 10 to 20 minutes at each breast.
- She appears alert, active, healthy, has good color and firm skin.

- Your breasts feel softer after nursing. (After about 4 to 6 weeks your milk supply will stabilize and your breasts will feel soft most of the time.)
- If you are using disposable diapers, it can sometimes be hard to tell whether or not your baby has urinated. An easy way to tell is to take a new diaper, pour a tablespoon or two of water in it, and compare this diaper to another new diaper.

Signs of Dehydration

There are also signs that your baby is not getting enough nourishment. You should consult your pediatrician immediately if your baby appears to have these signs of dehydration:

- Failure to gain weight or weight loss
- Minimal urination; urine is dark yellow or looks like brick dust
- No bowel movements (newborns); diarrhea
- Dry mouth
- Fever
- Severe vomiting
- Overly sleepy, not alert
- Wrinkled skin that looks like crepe paper
- Poor skin resiliency (i.e., when the skin is pinched, it returns to its natural shape slowly)
- A visible dip at the fontanel
- Decreased tearing (older infants)

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your baby, consult your pediatrician.

About the Author

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, [Let Me Say This About That](#).

<http://www.typeamom.net/how-to-know-your-baby-is-getting-enough-breast-milk.html>