

San Maternity

Breastfeeding – Monitoring Baby’s Progress

Breastfeeding Information – Handout 5

Updated October 2023

The majority of mothers make enough milk for their babies, but it can take time to feel confident that your baby is getting what they need. There are several reliable signs you can monitor to ensure feeding is going well.

Infants’ weight

Monitoring your baby’s weight will provide the most reliable indicator of whether your baby is getting enough. After birth, your baby will be reweighed once within the first 3 days and the night before you go home. It is normal within the first 4 days for your baby to lose up to 10% of their birth weight. After this your baby will start to regain weight and should be back at their birth weight by 2 weeks of age. As a general guide, babies should continue to gain weight at the following rates:

- birth to age 3 months – a gain of 150-200 grams per week
- age 3 to 6 months – a gain of 100-150 grams per week
- age 6 to 12 months – a gain of 70-90 grams per week

Wet & dirty nappies

The number of wet and dirty nappies your baby does each day can help you determine if your baby is getting enough. Here is what to expect:

DAY	WET NAPPIES	POO’S
1	At least 1	At least 1 Meconium poo (green/black and tar like).
2	At least 2	At least 1 Meconium poo (green/black and tar like).
3	At least 3	At least 1 transitional poo (green/brown in colour)
4	At least 4	At least 1 transitional poo (green/brown in colour)
5+ to 6 weeks	5+ heavy wet nappies. The colour should be pale. A heavy wet nappy will weigh around 60grams. You can place ¼ cup of water in a dry nappy to compare.	3+ Breastmilk poos. These poos are often yellow. They are watery with a seedy consistency like mustard. Poos may be brown, green, or orange at times. This is normal.

Infant behaviour & feeding patterns

Most babies do not have a feeding or sleeping pattern during the first few months. Young babies feed frequently, usually around 8-12 times each 24hr period. Feeds may be short (around 10 mins) or last longer (up to 70 mins).

Your baby may also feed from one or more breasts per feed. As long as your baby is gaining weight well and doing enough dirty and wet nappies it doesn't matter how often and how long your baby feeds or whether they need one or more breasts per feed.

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Your baby should be content after most feeds during the day, but it is common for babies to be fussy in the evening and overnight. These fussy periods are often referred to as ‘cluster feeding’ or ‘witching hours’.

During these periods babies feed frequently and can be hard to settle. If your baby has lots of wet and dirty nappies and is gaining weight well, this behaviour should not be interpreted as ‘running out of milk at the end of the day’. Milk production is a continuous process over a 24-hour period, although the rate of production varies according to the fullness of the breast.

Tips:

- Your breast milk supply will meet your baby’s demands. Feed your baby when they are showing hunger signs. Hunger signs include stirring from sleep, mouth opening, seeking / rooting, stretching, increased physical movement, putting hand up to / in mouth, crying, agitated movements, and skin colour turning red
- Some days your baby will want more feeds than others
- It takes most mothers and baby’s a few weeks to become confident with breastfeeding and trust the process. The first few weeks of breastfeeding can be challenging as you and your baby learn. Take the time that you need and reach out for professional support.

For more information:

Australian Breastfeeding Association

p: 1800 686 268

w: www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Sydney Adventist Hospital Lactation Department

p: 02 9480 4071

w: www.sah.org.au/maternity

Raising Children Network

w: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Reviewed October 2023 by Leah Roberts, IBCLC RM.

Page 2

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