

Is Baby Getting Enough?

Weight gain is the most accurate way to tell if your baby is getting enough milk, so weigh your baby. A normal weight gain is approximately four to eight ounces per week. As your baby becomes a little older, the increase in weight will become more obvious. If you're concerned about your baby, talk to your healthcare provider or a breastfeeding counselor.

Also, keep track of your baby's diaper changes since what goes in must come out. At first your baby will have only one or two wet diapers per day. After your milk supply increases, baby should have five to seven wet diapers (six to eight if using cloth diapers) and three to five bowel movements every day. Some babies may have a small bowel movement with every diaper change.

The first bowel movements will be dark black, with a tarry consistency. Both color and consistency will change within a day or two of your milk supply increasing. The color of a breast milk stool is most often a mustard-yellow, but it can vary from tan to yellow to yellow-green. The consistency is loose and seedy and will remain this way as long as your baby is receiving only human milk. In addition, while nursing, your baby should swallow after every couple of sucks, so listen for swallowing. Other indicators include your breasts becoming softer after feedings, your baby's skin feeling smooth and firm, and baby seeming satisfied after feedings.

However, if your baby shows any of the following signs, contact your healthcare provider immediately:

Weak cry

Skin with no resiliency (when pinched it stays pinched looking)

Dry mouth and dry eyes

Less than the usual amount of tears

Minimal urine output (less than two wet diapers in 24 hours)

Fever

Fontanel (soft spot) on the baby's head is sunken or depressed

If you previously had breast surgery, be sure to tell your healthcare provider. Many mothers have been able to fully breastfeed their babies after breast surgery. However, it is important that your healthcare provider be aware of your history and past breast surgery(ies) so that you and your baby can be monitored closely to make sure your milk production is good and baby is gaining weight.