

Your Milk Supply

The first milk in your breasts, called colostrum, is very special for your baby. It is thick, creamy and yellowish in color almost like milk concentrate. Colostrum is especially designed to help your baby learn to eat and breathe at the same time; that is why it is thick. About 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon per feeding is all that is needed at first. It is the perfect first food and helps protect your baby against infections.

Over the first few days the colostrum starts changing to “mature milk” and gradually becomes thin and bluish-white. Breastmilk is food, drink, and preventive medicine for your baby. It is balanced to meet all your baby’s needs and changes according to your baby’s age. When the colostrum starts changing to mature milk, it is common for your breasts to make more milk than your baby needs. The increased blood supply and extra milk may cause you to feel full and tender. Feeding your baby often will relieve the fullness.

If your supply gets too far ahead of your baby’s needs and your breasts become very full or swollen, your baby may have trouble getting on the breast (latching on). Apply cool cloths, ice packs, or clean, cold, raw cabbage leaves to reduce swelling. Also, try expressing some milk by hand or pump to soften your breast enough that baby can latch on. Breast fullness should decrease as your baby learns to empty your breast and your milk supply adjusts to your baby’s needs. If your breasts are still very full and tender after 1-2 days, call your lactation specialist or doctor for help.