

Since breast milk production is based on supply and demand, the key to increasing supply is to empty the breast more often and more effectively. Some key points to remember are:

The Baby is Better than the Pump:

The best way of emptying the breast is to make sure the baby is well latched on and actively feeding.

Keep the Baby Actively Feeding

Most newborns are very sleepy once they get to the breast and suck mostly for comfort. Make sure that you listen for the suck and swallow of breast milk. If not, then take them off, stimulate them to awaken and try to re-latch.

Ways to Keep Baby Active at the Breast

Gently stroke babies cheek. Move babies arm or use a cool cloth. Tickle the feet. If they are still not responding then take them off the breast, burp them, change their diaper and re-latch.

Increase the Frequency of Breast Feeding

Milk supply is increased by more frequent, effective feedings INSTEAD of longer, infrequent feedings. If the feeding lasts beyond 15-20 minutes per side then your baby is most likely sleeping at some point during the feed.

Be Sure to Take Care of Yourself

Stress can decrease milk supply, so try to rest as much as possible. Make sure to eat and stay hydrated. If you are thirsty then you are dehydrated – drink more water!! Sleep when the baby sleeps.

Pumping or Hand Expression

If you are pumping to increase supply in addition to breast feeding, pump as often as you are able without undue stress.

If the baby is active at the breast and you have a choice between a nap and pumping, take the nap. If the baby isn't emptying the breast then you should pump before napping. Make sure to pump every time you are giving a supplemental bottle. If you are pumping instead of nursing then pump at every feeding. A double electric pump is the most effective.

Herbs to Increase Supply

- Fenugreek is the most effective herb for increasing milk supply. It comes in capsule form, usually 580-620 mg capsules.
- You should take 3 capsules 3 times a day for a total of 9 capsules a day.
- Milk thistle – 500 mg capsule per day
- Goat's Rue – tincture form 1-2 ml, 3x/day or 500 mg capsule 4x/day
- Stinging Nettles – tea form 5 grams of tea steeped in 8 oz water for 15 minutes
- Hops – craft brewed BEER! IPA is high in hops. Everything in moderation, maybe 1 per day.
- Bowl of steel cut oatmeal for breakfast or anything made with oats.