

IS MY BABY...

Getting Enough?



Every child is unique in their development and growth rates vary for children in their first year. Some parents may wonder if their child is getting enough when exclusively breastfeeding. Many factors come into play when addressing adequate milk intake and vitality in newborns and infants. The following highlights factors and norms when addressing growth adequacy in exclusively breast/chestfed babies.

INITIAL WEIGHT AVERAGES:

- Most babies lose weight from birth until day 3 or 4, averaging weight loss at 5-7% of their birth weight
- Weight loss in the 8-10% range may be considered within the normal limits if nursing seems to be going well and the babies physical examination is normal.
- Most nursing babies begin gaining weight around day 4 after birth and regain their birth weight by day 10-14. The average weight gain is about half a pound per week or a little over an ounce per day for the first 2-3 months
- If baby loses more than 10% of birth weight or continues to lose weight after day 4, nursing should be evaluated, and illness and physical/anatomical abnormalities in the baby should be ruled out.
- The average nursing baby doubles their birth weight by 5-6 months of age

INDICATORS OF GROWTH:

- Growing in weight and head circumference (babies do not grow consistently)
- During the first six months, growth in length is about 1 inch/month and about half and inch for head circumference

MILK INTAKE & DIAPER OUTPUT

- Consistent weight gain is the most reliable indicator of adequate milk intake. Although, some babies gain slowly regardless of receiving sufficient breast/chestmilk.
- To gain weight and thrive, most newborns nurse at least 8 times in a 24 hour period.
- During the first day or two of life, one or two wet diapers and stools is typical.
- 3-4 stools per day by the 4th day of life may be an indicator of sufficient milk intake.
- By day 5, stools usually turn yellow and seedy, and urinations should be around 5-6 per day.
- It is important to remember that diaper output is not an adequate indicator of milk intake.

RED FLAGS

If a newborn still has 2 or fewer wet diapers per day after day 3-4, it could be an indication of insufficient milk transfer with dehydration. Babies may be lethargic, lose skin elasticity, appear prominently yellow (jaundice), have dry eyes and mouth, have a fever and/or sunken fontanel. Contact your care provider immediately.

Mohrbacher, N. (2020). *Breastfeeding answers: A guide for helping families*. Nancy Mohrbacher Solutions Inc.

Sikemma, K. (n.d.). [Newborn baby]. *Visme*.