

The Qualities of Breastmilk

Breastmilk is the very best food for your new baby. It contains all the right amounts of protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals and immune factors that your baby needs to grow that formula cannot provide.

Breastmilk changes to meet your growing baby's needs. Your body will make different types of breastmilk to feed your baby.

Types of Breastmilk: Colostrum and Mature Milk

Colostrum: Your first milk is called colostrum. This precious, thick, yellowish liquid is present before birth and for up to a week after you have your baby. Your new baby needs this milk in the first week of life to nourish and protect him from sickness. It also helps him have his first bowel movement. The same substances which protect you from illnesses are passed to your baby through this milk and help keep your baby healthy. The yellowish color of colostrum is from the high amount of vitamins and proteins found in this special milk. This milk is the only nourishment your small baby will need in the beginning. Also, the more you feed your baby, the sooner your mature milk will come in.

Picture of mother and baby

Mature Milk: Between 3 to 6 days, you will notice your milk begin to change. It will become more pale, thin, and watery. This is because the water in your milk increases to meet your baby's changing needs. Remember, formula does not do this. The color of your breast milk can vary from light orange to pale gray depending on the foods you have eaten. Even though your milk might look like non-fat cow's milk, this does not mean that your milk is "weak". Breast milk provides the best source of fat that your baby needs for brain growth. The protein in breast milk is easier

to digest and causes less allergies than formula. The main source of carbohydrate is from lactose, which your baby can most easily use for energy. And over time, the content of your mature milk changes to meet your baby's growing needs.

Remember, your emotions do not affect the quality of your milk. Your milk cannot "spoil". No matter how long you breastfeed, your milk will be full of antibodies which protect your baby against many illnesses.

Breastmilk Supply

- Begin breastfeeding as soon as possible after birth
- Avoid giving supplements of water or formula unless medically indicated. It is important that your baby gets used to feeding on the breast
- Feed your new baby 8 to 12 times in a 24 hour period.
- Feeding on demand will help your baby make more milk. Your body continuously makes milk.
- It is not true that resting the breast gives more milk. Remember, the more you breastfeed, the more milk that you will have for your baby.
- Breastfeeding your baby does not make your breasts sag.

Growth spurts

Most babies go through times of sudden growth during the early months. They are usually around 2 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months. However, some babies will vary from this. Knowing about growth spurts will help you when the time comes. Growth spurts only last a few days, just long enough for the baby to build up your milk supply to meet his growing needs. Your baby may be fussy and restless and will want to nurse often during these times. By feeding your baby more often, your body will make more milk to meet your baby's growing needs.

Picture of mother and babies

For additional information, please contact:

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