

Increasing breast milk supply with medication (page 1 of 2)



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Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Name: Rachel Tilly
Role: Newborn feeding support nurse
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This leaflet gives you information about a course of medication which has been suggested to you to help increase the supply of your breast milk. You have probably already spoken to a Neonatal nurse or Midwife who has experience in helping mothers to increase their milk supply.

Advice

Breast milk supply is most often diminished when you have been unable to put your baby to the breast because he or she is too small or unwell and you have had to express breast milk for a time. You may have found that initially you were able to express good amounts of milk but because of the various demands on you and the stress of the situation, the milk supply has tailed off. The most effective means of increasing your milk supply is to increase the frequency with which you remove milk from the breast.

Some mothers are tempted to express less frequently because initially there seems to be more milk by waiting longer before expressing.

Ultimately this will result in a further reduction in milk supply.

If your baby can go to the breast, ask your nurse or midwife to check that your baby is attached correctly at the breast you should continue to feed your baby as often as possible.

If your baby is unable to breast feed and you are needing to express milk the following tips should help.

Tips to increase milk supply

- aim to express at least 8 to 10 times in 24 hours
- ask a midwife/neonatal nurse to check your pumping technique and that the funnel fits correctly
- if your baby is well enough aim to have your baby skin-to-skin contact for long periods of time as this will boost milk stimulating hormones, Oxytocin and Prolactin
- use the double pump function on your electric pump, as there is research to prove that this is more effective than single pumping
- aim to express next to your baby; when this isn't possible look at a photograph of your baby or smell a soft cloth that has been next to baby
- consider cluster expressing

- don't go longer than 4 hours overnight without expressing
- if your baby is well enough aim to have your baby skin-to-skin for long periods of time as this will boost milk stimulating hormones, Oxytocin and Prolactin.

Remember to ask the nurse or midwife caring for your baby for advice on all the above.

Domperidone

Sometimes you are doing all of the above, but your milk supply is static or decreasing, in which case it may be suitable for you to try a drug called domperidone. Domperidone will need to be prescribed by your GP

Domperidone is usually used in the UK to prevent sickness and improve the motion of the gut. It is not licensed to increase breast milk supply but has been found to do so and has been used successfully in some cases of low breast milk production. This is because it stimulates an increase in the production of prolactin by the body. Prolactin is the main hormone involved in producing breast milk. A small amount of domperidone passes in your milk to the baby but this has not been found to cause any harm to the baby. The usual prescription when using domperidone to increase breast milk supply is one 10 milligram tablet, 3 times a day for 1 week. Domperidone should not be taken with some other medications or if you have any heart problems. Please read the patient information leaflet supplied with your prescribed tablets before starting to take them. Please be aware that the information sheet will advise you not to breast feed when taking this drug. Not everyone responds to medication in the same way and taking domperidone is not a guarantee that your milk supply will increase. Remember to tell your doctor about any other medication, including herbal preparations, that you are taking. Ensure all medication is stored out of reach of young children.

Further Support

For further support please speak to the nurse looking after your baby or Jenny Stagg (Specialist breastfeeding support midwife) on 0777 502 7151

- Facebook group Salisbury Breastfeeding Support UK
- National Breastfeeding helpline 0300 100 0212
- Association of Breastfeeding mother (ABM) 0300 330 5453
- The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) 0300 330 0700
- La Leche League 0345 120 2918