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*Photo Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

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WHAT IS A GROWTH SPURT?

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING



Growth spurts are times your baby grows very fast. This is normal.

During growth spurts, babies need more calories. For breastfed babies, this means nursing more often to meet the baby's nutritional needs. If baby pulls off the breast and still acts hungry, start the feeding again.

Growth spurts last for 1 to 2 days for most babies.

How to tell baby may be having a growth spurt

- Baby nurses more often and stays at the breast longer.
- Baby seems extra fussy or cries more often than usual.
- Baby pushes or pulls at your breast or acts very restless while nursing.
- Baby is at an age when growth spurts occur.

Ages when growth spurts occur

The first growth spurt occurs about 2 to 3 weeks after the baby is born.

Other growth spurts may occur at about:

- 6 weeks
- 3 months
- 6 months

Growth spurt tips

Feed when baby seems hungry

- Nurse when baby shows hunger cues, even if more often than usual.
- If baby pulls off the breast and still acts hungry, resume feeding on the other breast.
- Hang in there! After 1 to 2 days, baby should go back to the previous feeding schedule.

How to tell if baby is getting enough breastmilk

- Baby should have at least 6 wet diapers a day.
- Baby should have at least 3 dirty diapers a day.
- Baby should gain 4 to 7 ounces per week.

After about 4 to 6 weeks, a baby who only drinks breastmilk may have fewer soiled diapers. Some babies may not have a bowel movement every day.

Understanding growth spurts

During the first growth spurt, many nursing parents worry that they are losing their milk supply and their babies are not getting enough milk. The parent's breasts may become smaller and softer at this time. The reason is less swelling in the breast, not less milk. The nursing parent's breasts are never empty; they are always making milk for the baby. During growth spurts, it may seem like the baby is nursing all the time. This is normal—hang in there. In a day or two, baby will be less demanding.

Some growth spurts even go unnoticed. If the baby seems extra fussy or is nursing more than before and you suspect a growth spurt, nurse the baby. You cannot spoil the baby by holding them and offering the breast more frequently. Nursing more often will cause your body to make more milk. It will build up your milk supply to meet the baby's needs. Giving a bottle or pacifier will not help. It will cause you to make less milk. It cuts down on the amount you breastfeed, making your body think you need less milk, so less milk will be produced.



*USBC

