

Tips for Increasing Milk Supply

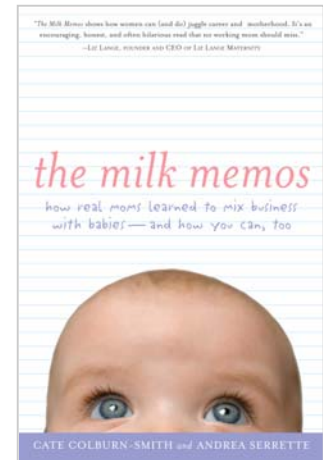
Adapted from:

The Milk Memos:

How Real Moms Learned to Mix Business with Babies – and How You Can, Too

By Cate Colburn-Smith & Andrea Serrette

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Just about every Milk Mama on the planet has worried about milk supply at some point. Try to relax a bit and trust that your body will provide the breastmilk your baby needs. Here are some tips that will help ensure this happens:

- **Get plenty of rest** – ha! Really, forget that load of laundry and the phone call you need to make; go to sleep right after putting your baby down for the night.
- **Don't let yourself get stressed out** – ha ha! Yes, we know: as a working mom of an infant, stress is as unavoidable as the poopy diaper that occurs just as you're racing out the door to daycare. Make it a point to relax throughout the day. Even if it's just breathing deeply with your eyes closed for a couple minutes – you can always imagine you're taking a luxurious bubble bath.
- **Invest in a high quality, efficient pump.** Take our advice and splurge. The right pump makes a big difference. (*The Milk Memos* includes more information on selecting a pump.)
- **Pump and nurse as frequently as you can** – keep that milk mooooooooooving!
 - *When you're with your baby, nurse on demand.* Despite our advice about resting, you may decide it's worth it to succumb to your baby's cries for milk in the middle of the night, even though your friends and/or inlaws insist she should be sleeping through the night by eight months or so. Some Milk Mamas find 3:00 a.m. to be a snuggly, peaceful, quiet time to bond with their babies *and* keep their milk supply up.
 - *Try pumping right after you nurse your baby.* We know that extra pumping does *not* appeal, but this is a great way to tell your breasts in no uncertain terms that your baby needs more milk!
 - *Pump at least twice a day at work.* Lactation consultants and experienced Milk Mamas agree that a nursing baby is more efficient than a breastpump. So it's important that you remain diligent about pumping as frequently as possible at work to keep up with your baby's consumption.

- **While pumping, visualize your baby.** Think of it as fantasizing Milk Mama style! Mother Nature designed you with a physiological reflex that can trigger milk let down when you just think about your baby (or sometimes when you hear another baby crying in the supermarket). Look at your baby's picture. Or close your eyes and imagine his sweet, warm mouth in place of the plastic funnel on your breast, his soft breathing in place of the breastpump motor. Your milk will let down faster, you will make a little more, and you will feel more relaxed.
- **Gently massage your breasts as you pump** – or have your husband do this (just kidding)! This stimulates let down, and may also ward off clogged ducts.
- **Hunch over as you pump.** Let gravity help. You can worry about posture another day.
- **Drink plenty of water** (at least eight 8-ounce glasses or two liters per day). Most lactation experts say this doesn't directly boost milk supply, but all the Milk Mamas we know swear by it.
- **Try teas or herbal supplements containing fenugreek.** You can find "Mother's Milk" tea or fenugreek capsules at most health food stores, and even some regular grocery stores. Many moms report increased milk production after one to three days. As with all herbal supplements, proceed with caution. Fenugreek is on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe) list when taken in moderation by nursing moms. Innocuous side effects include sweat and urine that smell like maple syrup – or a baby that smells like maple. Fenugreek is in the same family as peanuts, so don't use it if you have a peanut allergy. Also, if fenugreek causes you and/or your baby to have upset stomach or diarrhea, discontinue use. Though it's fine to use fenugreek for several weeks or even months, you will likely find that once your supply is increased, you can easily maintain it on your own by following the other advice listed here.
- **Call a lactation consultant.** Their mission is to get breastmilk into the mouths of babies, and they would love nothing more than to help you boost your supply and continue nursing happily.
- **Drink a beer** – really! Nobody is sure, but some experts believe the hops and/or brewer's yeast stimulate milk production. Non-alcoholic beer has the same effect, but if you choose the real stuff, wait at least two hours before nursing, and note that moderation is recommended!

For laughter, encouragement and many more Milk Mama tips, check out [*The Milk Memos*](#), a one-of-a-kind guide to balancing motherhood and work, based on actual journals kept by a group of IBM women during their visits to the company's employee lactation room.