

What is a growth spurt?

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

During growth spurts, babies need more calories. For breastfed babies, this means nursing more frequently to meet the infants' 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 can I tell if my baby is having a growth spurt?

- ♥ Your baby may nurse more often and stay at the breast longer.
- ♥ Your baby may seem extra fussy or cry more often than usual.
- ♥ Your baby may push or pull at your breast or act very restless while nursing.

When can I expect my baby to have a growth spurt?

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

Other growth spurts occur at about:

- ♥ 6 weeks
- ♥ 3 months
- ♥ 6 months

How can I tell if my baby is getting enough breast milk?

- ♥ Your baby should wet at least 6 to 8 diapers a day.
- ♥ Your baby should have at least 3 soiled diapers a day.*
- ♥ Your baby should gain 4 to 7 ounces per week.

* At about 4 to 6 weeks, a baby who only drinks breast milk may have fewer dirty diapers. Some babies may not have a bowel movement every day.

What do mothers experience during growth spurts?

During the first growth spurt, many mothers worry that their milk supply is decreasing and their babies are not getting enough milk. Your breasts may become smaller and softer at this time. The reason is less swelling in the breast, not less milk. As a nursing mom, your breasts are never empty; your breasts are always making milk for your 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, your baby will be less demanding. Some growth spurts even go unnoticed. If your baby seems unusually fussy or is nursing more than he was before and you suspect a growth spurt, nurse him.

You cannot spoil your baby by holding him 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 your baby's needs. Giving a bottle will not help. It cuts down on the amount of breastfeeding you do, making your body think you need less milk.

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