MILK SUPPLY – WEIGHT GAIN

in the early days of breastfeeding

Every woman will produce and store different amounts of milk.
The amount is important only if baby is not obtaining enough to gain weight.
A poor latch will result in a baby not getting milk,
so it is important that a baby's latch be checked.
If the latch is good and milk is transferring,
other issues need to be addressed.

Stools and Wets

The first stools that a baby passes are called **meconium**; they are sticky and dark green or black. By the 3rd day of life, these stools change and become lighter. **By the 5th day, they are usually a normal breastmilk stool**: a mustard yellow liquid often with small curds or seeds. They generally have little odor.

By day 4-5 your baby should be passing at least **3 substantial stools and** at least **6 wet diapers** per day. If you have a hard time telling if a disposable diaper is wet, put a piece of tissue paper in the diaper.

Weight Gain

In the first 4-5 days of life a baby consumes fairly small quantities of milk. At 24 hours of age, a baby will consume 1/4 to 1/2 oz. (8-15 cc) of colostrum at each feeding. This amount gradually increases to about 1 - 2 oz. (45 – 60 cc) by ~day 5, depending upon your baby's weight.

Babies should not lose more than 7-10% of their birth weight in the first 4 days of life. By day 4-5 your baby should now be gaining weight.

By day 7, babies usually consume their weight x 2.5 in ounces per day. So a 7 lb. baby would consume ~17.5 oz. a day. The 17.5 oz. is spread throughout the number of feedings that a baby receives. If baby feeds 8 times in 24 hours, baby would get about 2 to 2 1/2 oz per feed. However, babies do not always eat the exact same amount at each feeding.

Babies usually reach their birth weight again by day 14. Average weight gain is then about 4 to 8 oz. per week. Gain may decrease slightly after 4 months of age. The volume of milk that a healthy breastfed baby takes at the breast remains fairly constant from 1 month to 6 months of age.

Adapted from Milkworks