

What is an overabundant milk supply?

An overabundant milk supply is when you have a lot of milk which may leak and spray. Your baby may struggle to latch on and come off your breast, coughing and spluttering if she can't swallow fast enough. She may also refuse your breast and become upset. When you're getting used to feeding your baby, it can be disheartening if she's spluttering or turning away from your breast. Rest assured that it probably won't be long before you and your baby settle into a routine that's comfortable for both of you. It just takes a little while for your breasts to adjust to your baby's needs.

When you have a lot of milk at once it's often called an overactive letdown. In reality, your letdown reflex isn't overactive, it's just quickly triggered. The letdown may be so full and fast, you don't have time to attach your baby before your milk starts spraying.

What causes such a big letdown of milk?

In the early days of breastfeeding when your milk comes in, your breasts will produce lots of milk. This is because your body is making enough milk to feed twins or even triplets, in case you need to. As soon as your baby starts to breastfeed successfully, your milk production should begin to regulate. Then you'll provide her with just the amount she needs. If the problem carries on after this, it could be because your baby isn't latching on properly.

True oversupply is rare, and may be a symptom of an illness or a side-effect of a medicine you're taking. If you think this might apply to you, talk to your doctor.

What can I do to help my baby feed more easily?

Check that your baby is able to latch on well. It can be a bit of a struggle for your baby to get a good mouthful of breast when your milk is leaking and spraying.

You may find that the following tips can help your baby to latch on:

- You may find you can latch your baby on better if you vary your feeding position. Try sitting your baby up facing you to feed, allowing her head to tip back a little. You could also lie or lean back and feed with your baby on top of you, as if trying to use gravity to slow the flow.
- Before each feed, hand express or pump just enough milk to slow down your flow. You can either discard this milk or express into a sterilized container to give to your baby later. Don't pump too much, and don't pump between feeds. The more milk you take from your breasts, the more you'll produce to fill the demand.



What can I do if my milk supply doesn't slow down?

If your breasts are still producing a surplus of milk, it is likely that your baby is not latching on properly. If your baby can't latch on well, she may need to feed more often than those babies who can. Very frequent feeds may keep your milk production levels high for a while. This can happen even though milk is accumulating in your breasts.

If your baby is latching on well but your breasts still feel too full, you could try using only one breast for two to four feeds. Put your baby to your breast as many times as she wants to feed, just make sure you use the same breast for up to a two-hour period. You can then pump your other breast (but only a little) to relieve pressure.

This technique should reduce your milk supply within a day or two. Keep an eye on your baby's weight in the following week, if you do this.