

Your important health information

Breastfeeding after breast reduction

With breast reduction surgery, some of your breast tissue is taken away to make the breasts smaller.

How the surgery is done can affect how much breastmilk the breasts can make but it should not stop you from breastfeeding your baby.

Is breastfeeding possible?

Yes, you can breastfeed your baby.

You will not know how much milk your breasts can make before your baby is born. It can take at least several days to several weeks after giving birth to know if you will reach a full milk supply.

Any breastfeeding or breastmilk will give your baby immunity, nutrients and closeness.

Almost all women who have had breast reduction surgery will be able to make some breastmilk.

How much milk you will be able to make will depend on:

- how much milk producing breast tissue remains in your breasts after surgery
- whether the milk ducts and nerves were affected: some milk ducts and nerves will grow back over time
- the amount of time between having the surgery and the birth of your baby – the longer the time, the better chance you have of making more breastmilk.

Many mothers who have breast surgery find they make more milk with each baby.

Before baby is born

- You may want to talk to a lactation consultant to:
 - learn about breastfeeding after breast surgery
 - talk about what to expect
 - make a feeding plan.
- Check your breasts for:
 - changes such as – growing bigger, heavier or tender
 - feeling (sensation) – can you feel touch, warmth or cold. This can tell you whether the nerves are working.
- You may want to attend a breastfeeding class to learn about breastfeeding and making breastmilk.

After baby is born

- **Hold baby skin-to-skin:**
 - helps get breastfeeding started
 - baby is more alert and ready to feed in the first few hours after birth
 - Having baby close to you helps you to feed them as soon as they are hungry
- **Feed baby when they are showing feeding cues:**
 - breastfeeding more often, day and night, will help to make more milk
 - most babies feed at least 8-12 times per 24 hours
 - expressing after, or between feeds can also be a way to help make more breastmilk
 - offer baby both breasts at each feed
 - extra fluids are not usually needed for at least the first 48 hours
 - using a dummy can stop:
 - baby from feeding properly
 - your breasts from making enough milk.
- **At each breastfeed check that:**
 - your baby is well attached at the breast
 - there is no nipple pain
 - baby is sucking and swallowing (drinking), especially as your milk comes in
 - your breasts are softer after a feed. There may be some lumpy areas that do not soften as the milk ducts may not be connected. This can be normal after breast reduction surgery. These areas will soften over a few days

Checking how you are going

| Age of baby | Number of wet nappies | Number of stools | Stool colour |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Day 1 (0-24 hours) | 1 x wet | 1 or more | Black & sticky |
| Day 2 (24-48 hours) | 2-3 x wet | 1-2 | Black or black/green |
| Day 3 (48-72 hours) | 3-4 x wet | 2-4 | Green or green/yellow |
| Day 4 (72-96 hours) | 4 x wet and paler | 4-10 | Green/yellow |
| Day 5 (96+ hours) | 5+ x wet and paler | 4-10 | Yellow, soft and seedy |

If you find

- baby is not having enough wet nappies or poo colour is not changing
- you are worried about your baby or feeding
- your baby is not gaining weight,

You may need to give extra feeds of expressed breastmilk (EBM) and/or infant formula. These feeds can be given to your baby by cup, bottle or supplemental feeding system.

If you are concerned, contact your midwife, Maternal & Child Health Nurse or Lactation Consultant /

Weight gain

Your baby needs to be weighed regularly.

In the first few days, it is normal to have some weight loss, of up to 10% of your baby's birth weight.

Baby should begin to gain about 20-30 grams a day in weight by five days old, and be back to birth weight by two weeks of age.

If baby's weight gain is slow or you are worried about your milk supply, it is important that your breastfeeding is checked by a Lactation Consultant or Maternal & Child Health Nurse.

It can take up to six weeks to know if you will reach a full breastmilk supply

Support and advice

If you have problems with feeding or have questions about breastfeeding after breast surgery do ask for help.

Our Breastfeeding Support Services can give you information and support before and after the birth of your baby.

Whichever way you choose to feed your baby will be respected and supported.

You may like to read

Breastfeeding After Breast Surgery – Australian Breastfeeding Association website
<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/breastfeeding-after-breast-surgery>

Breastfeeding After Breast Reduction (BFAR) - <https://www.bfar.org/reduction.shtml>

Defining Your Own Success: Breastfeeding After Breast Reduction Surgery – Diana West

Mercy Hospitals Victoria Ltd. Patient Information handouts - Making More Milk, Expressing Breastmilk

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

Mercy Hospital for Women Breastfeeding Support Service

Phone: 03 8458 4677

Werribee Mercy Hospital Breastfeeding Support Service

Phone: 03 8754 3407

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline

Phone 1 800 686 268

Maternal & Child Health Line

Phone 13 22 29

Private Lactation Consultants

www.lcanz.org

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