



Normal Intake & Output for a Breastfed Baby

Normal Intake

- A baby will typically eat at least 8-12 times in 24hrs – this frequency is normal!
- The timing of feedings usually varies – baby should eat whenever they feel hungry, which does not always follow a pattern or schedule.
 - This is what is meant by “feeding on demand” – feed baby when they show hunger cues, regardless of when they last fed.
 - Try not to limit baby’s time at the breast. If it seems like baby is eating constantly over a period of some hours, they are likely cluster feeding, which is also normal.

Normal Output

- Wet diapers:
 - Rule of thumb: one wet diaper for each 24hrs of life (Day 1 – 1 wet diaper, Day 2 – 2 wet diapers, etc.), until mom’s milk has increased in volume.
 - Once mom’s milk is in, expect at least 6 wet diapers every 24hrs.
 - How wet is a wet diaper? Pour 3Tbsp of water into one of baby’s diapers and feel – this is the minimum wetness to qualify as wet.
 - Normal appearance: baby’s urine should be clear or light yellow in color
 - Other colors can be normal BUT should be reviewed with baby’s provider to be sure.
- Poopy diapers:
 - For a newborn: The rule of thumb is one poopy diaper for each 24hrs of life until mom’s milk is in (around 2-5 days postpartum), i.e., Day 1 – 1 poopy diaper, Day 2 – 2 poopy diapers, etc.
 - Once mom’s milk is in, expect at least several poopy diapers every 24hrs.
 - Around 4-6wks of life, baby may go multiple days between poopy diapers – this is usually normal, especially if baby is putting out enough wet diapers. If you are unsure, contact baby’s provider!
 - Normal appearance
 - After birth, baby’s poop is black, sticky, and thick. This is called meconium.
 - As mom’s milk transitions from colostrum to breastmilk, baby’s poop will be greenish in color and less sticky. This is called transitional stool.
 - When mom’s milk is fully in, baby’s poop will be mustard yellow, seedy/curdy, and even loose or runny.

Other indicators that baby is breastfeeding/eating enough: baby appears well (i.e., generally content, engaged, responsive, alert when awake, not lethargic, etc.), baby is meeting developmental milestones, and baby is maintaining their growth curves for weight, length, & head circumference.

Concerns about baby’s intake or output? Contact an IBCLC and/or baby’s health care provider.

The information provided is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment for specific medical conditions. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease without consulting with a qualified healthcare provider. If you or your baby is experiencing a medical problem, you should contact a qualified health care provider.