

# OVERACTIVE LET-DOWN OR OVER SUPPLY? COPING STRATEGIES

Many assume that a baby struggling with milk flow is due to Overactive Let-down or Over supply. This is often incorrect.

There can be many reasons for babies fussing at the breast, persistent breast fullness, milk leaking while feeding, unusual stools and colicky, windy babies.

Inappropriate block feeding will reduce supply and can lead to other issues. If you are unsure if you have over supply or just a strong let-down it is recommended that you see a lactation consultant.

## When is it OK to block feed?

If you have been recommended block feeding by your lactation consultant/midwife/WCTO provider OR if the following symptoms are present:

**Baby:** Gaining > 250g/ week

Explosive green or watery stools

Continuously hungry even after feeding

Pulling back/clamping down or arching

Gulping/ coughing/ spluttering at breast

**Mother:** Constant milk leakage

Feeling full shortly after feeding

Recurring mastitis

Before slowing milk production with block feeding be sure that behaviours and symptoms are not due to other causes. <sup>i</sup>

## Steps to try before block feeding:

1. Laid-back feeding positions that use gravity to give your baby more control over milk flow.
2. Frequent breaks/burping so your baby can pace themselves.

<sup>i</sup> Mohrbacher, N. (2010) *Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple, A Guide for Helping Mothers*. Amarillo, Texas: Hale Publishing L.P.

## A Right-brained strategy to reduce supply:<sup>ii</sup>

Regular 3 hourly block feeding is rigid and ineffective. Right-brained block feeding is the preferred method to allow your breasts to spend some time comfortably full to slow production, but also some time well drained to prevent mastitis & give your baby the fatty milk, while being flexible to keep your breasts and baby happy.

3 days is usually enough. Only complete 5 days if recommended by your health professional.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Morning	L (R)	R (L)	L (R)	R (L)	L (R)
Afternoon	R (L)	L (R)	R (L)	L (R)	R (L)
Evening	L (R)	R (L)	L (R)	R (L)	L (R)
Night	Any	Any	Any	Any	Any

Morning = The time you get up until lunch time

Afternoon = Lunch time until dinner time

Evening = Dinner time until your bed time

Night = Bed time until Morning

The idea is that you FAVOUR one side during a block but don't limit feeding to that side.

Your 3 "Day" blocks will vary day to day.

During these blocks try to favour the 1<sup>st</sup> breast shown in the table as much as possible.

However, you can be flexible. If baby becomes unhappy, fussy or your other breast is feeling very uncomfortable, you can feed on the side in (brackets).

E.g.; Day 1, morning- spend as much time feeding on the LEFT breast as comfortable for you and your baby. The switch to the RIGHT breast for the afternoon.

During the Night feed on whatever side you feel you need to feed from. Anything goes!

The GOAL: As your supply gradually slows you will be able to breastfeed by "feel" by responding to your baby and do less favouring as you get to know how to keep your breasts well drained and comfortable.

<sup>ii</sup> Adapted from Christina Smillie, MD. Modified Block-feeding, (2010)