

Jo feeding her baby via the tube on her breast



# Success in Battling Low Supply

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*If you are having difficulty establishing a plentiful milk supply for your baby, there is hope. I am sharing my story for the possibility that it might inspire even just one woman who wants to breastfeed but is having supply trouble. Keep trying; it is worth it in the end!*

MY BABY SON WAS BORN AT HOME. It was a lovely birth, but unfortunately there were complications afterwards, causing me to haemorrhage and I was rushed to hospital by ambulance for surgery. I lost a lot of blood and was still quite unwell after three blood transfusions.

Despite this, breastfeeding seemed to be going well until he was a week or so old and we realised he had lost too much weight and wasn't gaining it back fast

enough. He urgently needed more milk than he was getting from me, and I was devastated by the thought that my milk might not be enough to nourish my baby.

The weeks that followed were really difficult, tiring and testing. I was fortunate to have the unfaltering support of two wonderful people - my midwife and my mum. I started by feeding my baby every three hours on both breasts, then expressing from both breasts (to stimulate more milk for next time),

followed by formula via a cup or spoon to make sure he got enough food while avoiding the bottle at this early stage. On top of all this I was guzzling anything that I heard of that might possibly increase milk supply, like fenugreek and breastfeeding tea.

He still wasn't gaining enough weight. My midwife called on the expertise of a lactation consultant and we started an adjusted regime. I would still feed three hourly on both breasts, then express on both breasts, then top up with formula - but the formula was given via a tube on my breast. I was also immediately put on a high dose of Domperidone to increase my milk supply.

At this point things were extremely tough. It was exhausting and fiddly. As if being a first time mother with a newborn

Skin-to-skin in the early days



*Despite all the difficulties and despair I was utterly determined to breastfeed. I can't put into words why. It was like some kind of primal instinct telling me that it is the right thing to do for me and for my baby.*

By the time he was two and a half months old, I was finally able to stop the tube feeding. He was then having mostly breast milk, with one small formula bottle before bed. Eventually I was able to drop this as well. I very slowly reduced the Domperidone and was able to stop it altogether when my baby was nine months old. I continued to breastfeed him until he was almost two, when I became pregnant again.

The fantastic news is that when my second son arrived, after a lovely birth at home and no complications, breastfeeding went wonderfully well and my supply was abundant this time. My second son is now a year old and I'm still feeding him.

My tip for anyone in a similar situation is to surround yourself with people who understand what you want, believe you can do it and will back you 100%. Like me, you may encounter pressure to give up breastfeeding. But as long your baby is gaining weight and receiving the nourishment he or she needs, forget about those who don't understand and listen to yourself and what you truly believe is right for you and for your baby.

Once you've gotten through the hard times, sit back and relax with your baby on your breast and enjoy! You'll have a happy, healthy breastfed baby. ♥

baby wasn't tough enough, I seemed to be constantly feeding. By the time I had finished an hour of breastfeeding, then expressing, then fiddling around with formula and the tube (and then cleaning all the equipment), it was only a short time before three hours was up and I had to start it all again.

I avoided going out because I had so much equipment and drama to get through one of these feeds, and while I'm perfectly comfortable breastfeeding in public I wasn't so keen on making a public display of all the pumping and supplementing.

It was at about this point that my cracked nipple got nasty and the gaping wound became infected, and shortly after that was the first of many bouts of mastitis. I really didn't know if it was going to work - no one could assure me that after all this effort, I would actually be able to make enough milk to feed my baby on my own. And though I had 100% support from my mum, midwife and

lactation consultant, I also had a lot of people telling me I should give up. This included my doctor constantly telling me I should stop breastfeeding and making it really difficult for me to get the Domperidone that I desperately needed to help with my milk supply (needless to say I've since changed doctors).

Despite all the difficulties and despair I was utterly determined to breastfeed. I can't put into words why. It was like some kind of primal instinct telling me that it is the right thing to do for me and for my baby. I would do anything I could to make it happen. And so we continued on like this for many weeks.

My supply slowly started to increase. I was able to reduce the volume of the formula top-ups little by little. We monitored my baby's weight every two days to ensure he was getting enough nourishment. With each good weight gain, we'd drop a little more of the formula. If he wasn't gaining enough, we'd increase it a little.