

What is the range of “normal” when it comes to breastfeeding?



How often and how long?

The infants assessed for this study were:

- | 1–6 months of age
- | Perfectly normal full-term infants
- | Exclusively breastfeeding on demand
- | Growing according to the WHO growth charts



4–13
Number of breastfeeding sessions in a day



12–67 minutes

Average duration of a breastfeeding session



How much?

Infants will drain the breast once a day, but usually they feed to appetite and stop feeding when they have had enough or want to change to the other breast.

- | From a single breast, the average volume an infant drinks is 75 ml (range: 30–135 mL)
- | It is normal for one breast to produce more milk than the other



67%
An average breastfeed removes 67% of the milk from the breast



54–234 mL

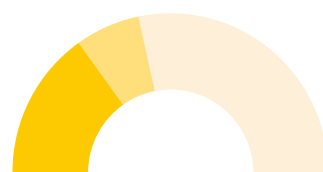
Average amount of milk of a breastfeeding session (1 or 2 breasts)



One breast or both?

Infants have varied feeding patterns:

- | 30 % always take just one breast
- | 13 % always take both breasts, and
- | 57 % mix it up!



- 30% one breast
- 13% both breasts
- 57% mixed

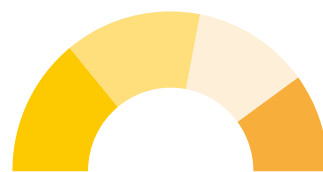


Night feeding is normal



- 64 % Day & Night
- 36 % Day only

- | The majority (64 %) of infants breastfeed day and night
- | These infants spread their milk intake evenly throughout the 24 hours



- 28% Morning
- 28% Afternoon
- 24% Evening
- 20% Night

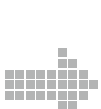
- | Only 36 % of infants don't feed at night (10 PM to 4 AM)
- | These infants have a large feed in the morning



Do boys and girls drink the same?

Boys do drink more than girls! Boy infants drink on average 76 mL more than girl infants.

Over a day, the average volume of milk consumed is 798 mL. But this varies from one infant who was drinking 478 mL to another drinking 1356 ml per day.



831 mL
Average daily amount taken by boys



755 mL
Average daily amount taken by girls

The range of normal...

478–1356 mL

Range of daily milk intake of exclusively breastfed infants who are growing according to the WHO charts.

Breastfed infants are indeed getting enough milk. As infants get older, they take fewer, shorter, larger feeds but their 24-hour (daily) intake will remain the same.

Between 3 and 6 months infants grow more slowly and have a relatively lower metabolic rate, so they don't need more milk.

1 Kent, J.C. et al. Volume and frequency of breastfeeds and fat content of breastmilk throughout the day. *Pediatrics* 117, e387-e395 (2006).
2 Kent, J.C. et al. Longitudinal changes in breastfeeding patterns from 1 to 6 months of lactation. *Breastfeed Med* 8, 401-407 (2013).