

# Use of Domperidone to Increase Breast Milk Production

Domperidone causes the increased production of the hormone prolactin as a side effect to its normal uses. Prolactin is the hormone which stimulates the cells in the mother's breast to produce milk.

Domperidone increases prolactin secretion indirectly, by interfering with the action of dopamine. One of the actions of dopamine is to decrease the secretion of prolactin by the pituitary gland. Domperidone is generally used for disorders of the gastrointestinal tract and is not licensed for use as a stimulant for milk production, though this does not mean that it cannot be prescribed for this reason.

There are a number of approaches which should be used to correct breast feeding difficulties. All of these should be dealt with first before resorting to using Domperidone. These include:

1. Correcting the baby's latch so that the baby can obtain as efficiently as possible the milk which the mother has available.
2. Correcting sucking problems including stopping the use of nipple shields, tongue tie correction etc.
3. Using milk expression after each feed to increase the supply.

Correcting all of the above may be all that is necessary to ensure the mother is producing plenty of milk.

## Using Domperidone for increasing milk production

Domperidone works particularly well to increase milk production under the following circumstances:

- It has frequently been noted that a mother who is expressing milk for a sick or premature baby in hospital has a decrease in the amount she pumps around four or five weeks after the baby is born.
- When a mother has a decrease in milk supply, often associated with the use of birth control pills (avoid oestrogen containing birth control pills while breastfeeding), or on occasion for no obvious reason when the baby is three or four months old.

### Domperidone still works, but often less dramatically when:

- The mother is pumping for a sick or premature baby but has not managed to develop a full milk supply.
- The mother is trying to develop a full milk supply while nursing an adopted baby.
- The mother is trying to wean the baby from supplements.

## Dose

Though there is no licensed dose for this indication there have been a number of published studies looking at the use of Domperidone to increase breast milk production. The suggested dose is:

**10 – 20 mg orally three to four times daily**

Doses higher than this should be avoided in breastfeeding mothers. An increase in breast milk production should be seen after three to four days though it may take two to three weeks to experience the full effect. Once breast milk production is optimised the Domperidone should be stopped, usually between three and eight weeks.