

FOREMILK & HINDMILK



Foremilk

Foremilk describes the breast milk at the start of a breastfeed, it has a lower fat content, but has plenty of lactose the principal sugar in breast milk. It's also known as watery milk and looks more transparent.

Hindmilk

Hind milk is the name for the breast milk towards the end of a feed as the breast empties. There is less of it but it has a higher fat content. This fatty milk rises as the creamy part in the top layer of the pumped milk.

Fat content

As milk is produced, fat clings to the walls of the milk-producing cells, while the more watery portion flows down the ducts toward the nipple, mixing with any milk left from the previous feed. **The longer the gap between feeds, the more diluted this remaining milk becomes.** This thinner milk contains more lactose and less fat compared to the richer milk stored higher up in the milk-producing cells of the breast.

What causes Imbalance?

An imbalance or lactose overload can be caused by:

1. **Oversupply:** producing more milk than the baby needs.
2. **Short feedings:** switching sides too soon before baby has emptied one breast.
3. **Inefficient latch:** prevents proper milk flow.

Signs of imbalance

Stool changes: Frequent, watery, bright green, or foamy stools.

Digestive discomfort: Excessive gas, abdominal pain, and colic-like symptoms. Spit up and reflux symptoms.

Behavioural changes: Fussiness or irritability during or after feedings.

Weight Gain: Though babies are often satisfied, they may suffer from sudden weight loss, or in some cases, surprisingly rapid weight gain.

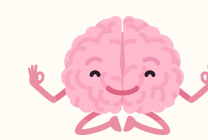
How to manage overload

- Make sure your baby is **latching properly**—sometimes a deeper latch helps them handle milk flow more comfortably.
- Experiment with **different feeding positions**, such as a laid-back or side-lying position, which can make it easier for your baby to cope with a faster flow.
- Let your **baby nurse for as long** as they need on each breast.
- Offering **feeds more often** can also help, as it allows your baby to take in smaller, more manageable amounts and prevents a buildup of larger volumes of lower-fat milk.
- **Block feeding** the baby where only one breast is used for a set time of 3–4 hours, while the other gets full. This signals the body to slow down milk production.
- **Massaging** while feeding and pumping also helps remove and increase the fat content of the milk.

What is lactose?

Lactose is sugar (carbohydrate) in human (and all mammals') milk. It is a large molecule and the body has to break it down to be able to absorb it. It is broken down in the body by an enzyme called lactase.

Importance of lactose:



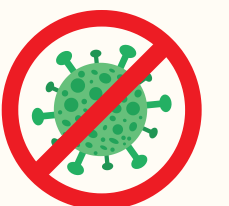
Helps develop the brain and nervous system

Provides 40% of the babies energy needs



Helps calcium and iron absorption

Promotes the growth of friendly bacteria such as Lactobacillus bifidus to fight pathogens



A healthy diet can support overall milk production and quality but it doesn't affect the ratio of fore milk to hindmilk. As that is largely influenced by breast emptying and frequency of feeds.

Lactose Overload

Lactose overload used to be known as **foremilk/hindmilk imbalance**.

If a mother produces more milk than her baby needs, her body will typically regulate and reduce supply over time to match the baby's requirements. In the meantime, the baby may consume an excess of lactose-rich foremilk, a situation often called a foremilk–hindmilk imbalance.

If your baby has a lot of milk that is relatively low in fat, it can rush through their digestive system more quickly than the lactose can be digested.

