What is the range of ‘normal’ when it comes to breastfeeding?

The infants assessed for this study were healthy term-born infants between 1 – 6 months of age. They were exclusively breastfeeding on demand and growing according to the WHO growth charts. The following information is not applicable for the first 4 weeks after birth.

How and when?

4–13 breastfeeding sessions in a day

12–67 minutes was the average duration of a breastfeeding session

Night feeding is normal

- The majority (64%) of infants breastfeed day and night
- These infants spread their milk intake evenly throughout the 24 hours
- Only 36% of infants don’t feed at night (10pm to 4am)
- These infants have a large feed in the morning

Your breasts

Infants have varied feeding patterns:

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

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

How much is ‘normal’?

Infants 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

54 – 234 ml
Average amount of milk of a breastfeeding session (1 or 2 breasts)

831 ml
Average daily amount taken by boys

755 ml
Average daily amount taken by girls

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.

For more on breastfeeding and how your milk supply works, visit medela.com/breastfeeding