

Prescription Galactagogues

A galactagogue is an herb or medication taken by a breastfeeding mother to increase her milk supply. Throughout history and in most countries, women have turned to plants or herbs to increase their milk supply. (See our information on **Herbal Galactagogues**.) There are two **prescription medications** that are known to increase serum prolactin hormone levels (the hormone connected to making milk): **Reglan** and **Domperidone**.

Not all women can increase their low milk supply with a galactagogue due to the many underlying causes of low milk production. Prior to taking a galactagogue, **MilkWorks highly recommends a feeding assessment by an IBCLC or breastfeeding medicine specialist to identify possible causes and solutions.**

Unfortunately, there is no magic pill when it comes to increasing milk supply. **Frequent milk removal is still the most effective way to increase your milk.**

REGLAN (metoclopramide) is a medication used for stomach issues, that was found to have the side effect of increasing prolactin hormone levels. However, it also commonly causes depression and fatigue, and may cause involuntary muscle spasms, called tardive dyskinesia. Two recent cases of serotonin-like reactions have been reported when metoclopramide was used in patients receiving sertraline or venlafaxine. **We recommend using it- and never without checking a prolactin hormone level first to document it is in fact “low”.**

- **There is no official established dosage for prescribing Reglan to increase milk supply.** Most studies have administered 5 - 10 mg per dose 2 or 3 times a day for 7 to 14 days. Some studies have used a tapering dose for the last few days of treatment, to avoid an abrupt drop in milk supply after discontinuing the drug. No published literature supports the efficacy or safety of higher doses, longer treatment periods, or repeated courses of therapy.

DOMPERIDONE is also a stomach medication. It is not approved for marketing in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration because it is not manufactured in the U.S. It is available in Canada and other countries. Nebraska’s Attorney General investigated practitioners who were prescribing domperidone via compounding pharmacies in 2006 and claimed that **prescribing this medication is illegal as it is not an FDA approved drug.** The FDA also released a [statement of concern](#) about cardiac arrhythmias. If mothers attempt to purchase this medication from outside the country, the package may be confiscated at the border.

- **The typical dosage for domperidone is 10 mg three times a day.** Two small studies found no statistically significant additional increase in milk output with a dosage of 20 mg three times a day versus 10mg. Women who failed to respond to the lower dose did not respond to the higher dose either. Doses >30 mg a day may increase the risk of arrhythmia and sudden cardiac death in patients receiving domperidone and should be avoided.

For additional information:

- Please read the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine’s protocol at <https://www.bfmed.org/> OR
- Visit LACTMED, a free online National of Library of Medicine data base at <https://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/>



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