



Mothers and Babies need...

- Warm support
- Appropriate information



### Information about Breastfeeding During Emergencies

Do women experiencing stress 'lose' their breast milk?

Arabic version

[هل تفقد النساء ال تي تشعرن بالتوتر الحليب؟](#)

English version for those living in Japan

[Do women experiencing stress 'lose' their breast milk?](#)

Japanese version

[「ストレスで母乳が出なくなる」って本当？](#)

Spanish Latin America version

[Se le va la leche a las mujeres que sienten estrés - Latinoamérica versión 2018](#)

La Leche League China - information on breastfeeding in emergencies, Chinese  
[紧急情况下的母乳喂养](#)

La Leche League Japan - information on breastfeeding in emergencies, Japanese  
[災害時の母乳育児支援](#)

[災害時の母乳育児相談～よく聞かれる質問 \(FAQ\)](#)

Links to other La Leche League and non-LLL resources for infant feeding in emergencies, multilingual

<https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/infant-feeding-emergencies-multilingual/>

La Leche League International – breastfeeding information

<https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/>

Please feel free to print copies and share widely.

◆ Myths: Stress & breastfeeding in emergencies ◆

Do women experiencing stress  
'lose' their breast milk?



Photograph by Radhika Rao

It is easy to become worried when you hear such words.  
What happens to your ability to produce breast milk  
when you are under strong stress?



**Do women experiencing stress 'lose' their breast milk?**



**Though the milk flow may 'temporarily' stop, it is designed to flow again.**

- **Stress *does not* affect the hormone Prolactin which makes breast milk**
- **Stress has a short-term effect on Oxytocin the other important hormone for breastfeeding**

The World Health Organization explains this as a positive mechanism that stops milk flowing at difficult moments – for example when an early human mother was fleeing with her baby from a wild animal – it is helpful that the milk does not start flowing while running but once mother and baby are safe and sheltered the milk flow starts again when the baby goes to the breast.



**What can I do to build up my breast milk supply again?**



**Frequent breastfeeding and lots of contact with your baby make the milk flow again.**

- **The milk is still all there inside the breasts, ready for the baby**
- **Ready to be made in response to the baby sucking**
- **The let-down reflex, which starts the milk flowing, has temporarily stopped**

Everyone is highly likely to be stressed during and after an emergency and disaster situation. Breastfeeding is an amazingly adaptive activity designed to win through despite everything. All a breastfeeding mother has to do is put the baby to the breast frequently and have lots of contact with the baby and soon the milk flow will start again.

**Being comforted and receiving support helps mothers.  
Breastfeeding can be soothing and will help promote healing and calmness for babies and mothers.**