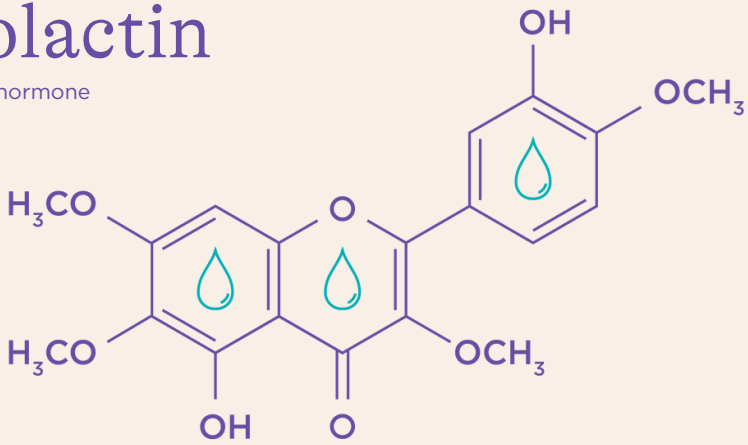
Prolactin

The milk hormone



Prolactin, produced in the pituitary gland at the base of the brain, enables milk production in breastfeeding mothers.

Did you know?

Post-birth, the drop in oestrogen & progesterone enables prolactin to surge, signalling milk gland production. Thereafter, nipple stimulation regulates prolactin levels.

Prolactin stimulates milk production in the alveoli. Its level increase with frequent milk removal and decrease with infrequent milk removal, which can affect milk production.

Touch, stimulates the release of prolactin, including skin-to-skin contact and sucking.

Prolactin levels peak at night.
Night feeds are key to increasing milk supply in the first 6-8 weeks of breastfeeding.

During nursing, high prolactin levels delay ovulation and provide protection against pregnancy.
As nursing decreases, fertility may return.

Smoking & depression

can lower prolactin levels, reducing milk production. Research suggests Nicotine and stress may interfere with prolactin production and release.

The prolactin receptor theory

This suggests that frequent milk removal in early lactation increases receptor sites for prolactin, boosting milk production.

Lansinoh.