



## Breastfeeding/Pumping

At some point, you may have to be away from your baby. But that doesn't mean you can't still feed him breast milk. All you need to do is learn how to express and store your milk. Plenty of women do it- Including working mothers. There are two ways to express your breast milk. You can do it by hand or specially designed pump.

### Steps for expressing breast milk:

- 1. Relax.** Wash your hands thoroughly. Then get yourself something to drink, and find a comfortable place to sit. Make sure that you're warm and relaxed. That will help your milk start to flow.
- 2. Massage your breasts.** Massaging helps release milk from the back of the breast. And that increases the total amount of milk you can express. There are several different ways to massage your breasts. The key is to find the way that works best for you.
  - **Fingertips**  
Start at the back of your breast. Press down lightly with two fingertips. Make small circular motions. Move toward the areola, until you've massaged your entire breast.
  - **Warm washcloth**  
Soak a washcloth in warm water. Wring out any excess. Then, starting at the back of your breast, press down firmly with the washcloth. Work your way forward to the areola.
  - **Diamond hands**  
Support your breast with both hands. Have your thumbs at the top, above your nipple, and your fingers below. Squeeze your breast gently as you slide your hands toward your nipple.
  - **Parallel hands**  
Place one hand above and one below your breast. Slide your hands toward your nipple. As you slide your hands forward, rotate them. Repeat this until you've covered your entire breast.
- 3. Stimulate let-down.** It's easier to express your milk after it has let-down. When you nurse your baby, his sucking action stimulates let-down. When you are expressing your milk, you can use your fingers or the palms of your hands to accomplish the same thing. Simply tickle or rub your nipples and areola. Some moms even find it helpful to think about their babies or have pictures of them nearby.
- 4. Express your milk.** You can express your milk by hand or you can use one of a variety of special pumps.
  - **Expressing by hand**  
If you choose to express your milk this way, make sure your hands and nipples are clean. And be sure to use a sterile container to collect the milk. Hold your breast in one hand. Your fingers should be positioned along the top and bottom of the areola. Then begin to press down rhythmically toward your chest wall. And your milk should begin to flow.
  - **Expressing by pump**  
If you are using a pump, it's a good idea to switch breasts several times. That way you'll be able to pump more milk. Here's one technique for pumping breast milk:  
Pump one breast for 5-8 minutes. Then switch and do the same with your other breast. Go back to the first breast for 3-5 minutes. Then pump your other breast for 3-5 minutes. Go back again to the first breast and pump for 2-3 minutes. Then switch again and pump your other breast for 2-3 minutes.

### Storing Your Breast Milk

It's easy to store your breast milk after expressing it. The important thing is to make sure that everything that touches the breast milk is clean. Your hands, the container you pump it into, and so on. If possible, wash all the containers and pump parts in a dishwasher. The water will be much hotter than it would be if you were washing by hand. And very hot water helps to kill germs. You can use disposable, presterilized plastic bottle liners if you want. They don't need to be washed, so they're always ready to use. But one thing to consider is that they weren't designed for storing breast milk. To make sure the liner doesn't get punctured, you might want to use two of them. One inside the other. Another option is to put your milk-filled liners in plastic freezer bags. Be sure to mark date each container. Then use the oldest milk first.

## Knowing how much breast milk to store

It's a good idea to store small amounts of breast milk in each container. About four ounces. That will help you prevent waste. Most small babies drink only two to three ounces at a feeding. Larger babies typically drink about six ounces at a feeding. Don't ever pour milk you've just pumped on top of frozen milk. The new milk will be at your body temperature. That could partially thaw the frozen milk and allow bacteria to grow. Also, don't store and reuse a bottle once your baby has drunk from it. Bacteria from his mouth can get into the milk and could cause illness.

## Refrigerating breast milk

Like any food, breast milk needs to be stored properly. Otherwise it can lose its nutrients and spoil. You can store breast milk in your refrigerator for up to 48 hours before feeding it to your baby. If you don't use it within 24 hours, it's a good idea to freeze it. The milk should go in the back of your freezer or in a deep freeze. Breast milk will keep for up to six months in a freezer. In a deep freeze, it will keep as long as two years. When you take out a frozen container of breast milk, it might not look the way you expect. It may appear a little yellow, bluish-green, or even brown. But don't worry. As long as it doesn't smell sour or taste bad, it's perfectly fine.

## Thawing and warming breast milk

You can set the container of breast milk in a bowl of warm water. Or you can hold it under lukewarm running water, shaking it continuously. Never use a microwave to heat milk. The problem is that microwaves don't heat evenly. The milk could become hot enough to seriously burn your baby, yet not even feel hot to your hand. Also, very high heat kills some of the protective cells that are in breast milk. It's a good idea to use thawed breast milk within 24 hours. And be sure not to refreeze it.

## Selecting a breast pump

### The types of pumps available

There are several types of breast pumps available. Some are manually operated. Some are battery-powered. And some are electric. Electric pumps usually do the best job of expressing your milk. That's because they come closest to matching your baby's sucking action. A baby that's hungry and awake baby will suck and swallow about 60 times a minute while breastfeeding.

### The correct fit for a pump

The way a breast pump "fits" is something to consider. The part of the pump that presses on the milk reservoirs under your areola is called a flange. The flange should be snug but still let your nipple fit easily in the opening.

### Keeping a pump clean

Try to find a breast pump that is easy to take apart to clean. Usually, you'll be able to put the parts in a dishwasher. That way they will be properly sterilized. Before buying a breast pump, you may want to rent or borrow one to see which kind you like best.

## Choosing the right pump for you

### Cylinder pump

This kind of pump is sometimes called a syringe, or piston-type pump. It can be operated manually or electrically. It's lightweight and does a good job. The downside is that it takes two hands to operate. And your hands may get tired.

### Trigger-handle pump

With this type of pump, you manually squeeze a trigger handle. And that creates suction. Trigger-handle pumps are usually more effective than other types of manual pumps.

### Squeeze-bulb pump

This manually operated pump looks like a bicycle horn. To use it, you squeeze the bulb. Then, as it expands, it creates suction. This type of pump is not usually recommended by breastfeeding consultants. The problem is that it has a slow suck-release cycle. That can make your nipples sore. And it doesn't do a good job of emptying your breasts.

### Battery-operated pump

It's easier to use this kind of pump than a manual one and you can do it with just one hand. It's more portable than an electric pump, but not as efficient. And, of course, you need to keep replacing the batteries.

### Electric pump

Gentle and efficient, an electric pump requires only one hand to operate. And it uses a suck-release pattern that is similar to your baby's. Electric pumps come in various sizes. The small ones are about two pounds. The largest are about the size of a sewing machine. Some working mothers opt to share an electric pump. The part you place on your breast is removable and they usually come with collection containers. Another option is to rent one of the larger models from a drugstore or medical supply company.