

E Nurture

A newsletter for breastfeeding mothers
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Tips for Pumping

Not all moms want or need to use a breast pump or to hand express milk. Many women plan their outings around the baby's feedings. Some choose to leave formula for an occasional bottle. Others take the baby along with them. For those who want to pump or express milk for occasional use, for a sick baby in the hospital, or for returning to work/school, here are some helpful hints:

- ☺ For a sick or premature baby, begin pumping as soon as possible (four to 12 hours) after birth to encourage development of your milk supply as well as to provide colostrum for the baby.
- ☺ In other situations, wait to begin pumping until the baby is about three weeks old. Focus on developing your breastfeeding relationship and your milk supply with your baby in the first weeks. Even if you are going back to work/school at six weeks, this will give you plenty of time to learn to pump and accumulate a freezer supply of breast milk.
- ☺ First attempts at pumping are meant to be a learning process. You are getting familiar with the pump and the technique, so you may only get a few drops of milk.
- ☺ Pump early in the day when your milk supply is more plentiful. Many mothers experience less fullness in the evening, which may make it harder to pump a measurable amount.
- ☺ Nurse the baby on one side, then immediately pump the other. The baby's sucking will trigger the "let-down" or "milk ejection reflex" which causes the milk to flow from the breast. With practice your body will become conditioned to letting-down when you start to pump.
- ☺ If the baby is taking a long nap, pump before he wakes to feed. The extra fullness of your breasts may help you to pump more easily. No pump removes all the milk from your breast. Even if you pump just before a feeding, there will still be milk left for the baby. Also, because milk is made while the baby is feeding in response to his sucking, the baby will always get milk while nursing.
- ☺ Pumping should never hurt! Since the baby sucks and releases in a regular pattern, for best results try to mimic this while pumping. A good quality hand pump is faster and more effective at milk removal than a poor quality battery or electric pump. Create a strong but comfortable suction on the breast, then release the suction often enough and completely enough to be effective yet comfortable. Some hand pumps automatically cycle the suction action; with others you need to build and release the suction in a regular pattern by pushing a button on the pump.
- ☺ Pump each breast for eight to 10 minutes then repeat each breast for five minutes. This is more effective than one long pumping of each breast. Remember that it may take a minute or two of pumping before the let-down kicks in and you start to get results. With practice this waiting time should shorten.
- ☺ For best results, try any of these tricks:
 - Gentle massage before pumping, using a circular pattern in each quarter of the breast, or stroking from the base of the breast toward the nipple.
 - Apply a warm wash cloth to the breast or take a warm shower before pumping.
 - Watch the baby or a picture of the baby, hold the baby's blanket or clothing and smell his scent, pump in baby's room, listen to a musical

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teddy bear, visually imagine the baby nursing or water flowing in a stream.

- ☺ For a hospitalized baby from whom you are separated, pump at least eight times in 24 hours, approximately every two to three hours. You can go one longer stretch of up to six hours at night if you shorten the interval between pumpings during the day. Pump each breast for 10-15 minutes even if you only get a small amount. You are pumping to encourage development of your milk supply, as well as to provide colostrum for your baby. When your milk supply increases, pump for a couple of minutes after the milk stops flowing to maximize the stimulation to your milk production.
- ☺ Breastmilk can be stored in bottles or plastic bottle liners. Seal with a twist-tie and label with the date (and time) pumped. It is best to store in two to three ounce amounts. Chill in the refrigerator, a cooler with ice, or a pre-chilled thermos bottle. After chilling, place bags upright in an empty ice cube tray for freezing. When frozen, put the bags of milk into a freezer bag in the back corner of the freezer where it is the coldest.
- ☺ Breastmilk is good for three to five days in the refrigerator and for three to six months in a freezer at 0 degrees. Always use the oldest milk first.
- ☺ Clean pump parts carefully with warm, soapy water and rinse thoroughly. For a sick baby in the hospital, it is better to sterilize pump parts and collection containers once a day. Check with your baby's caregivers for directions on cleaning your pump. Remember, for all babies, always wash your hands before pumping.
- ☺ To use frozen breastmilk, thaw milk in container under warm running tap water or standing in a container of warm water. DO NOT MICROWAVE. The milk will form hot spots that reform even after you shake the bottle; the hot liquid could burn the baby. It is OK to begin thawing milk in the refrigerator for use that day, but never thaw on the countertop. Remember that the milk and cream layers will separate when the milk stands. Just swirl the bottle before feeding to blend them.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments,
please call the lactation consultants
at The Family Birth Place at Park Ridge Hospital.

Breastfeeding Helpline
(585) 368-4033