

Commonly Asked Questions

How Often Should I Pump?

If separated from baby: Pump 8 to 10 times in 24 hours.

To increase milk supply: Pump 5 to 10 minutes per side after each daytime feed.

How Much Will I Express?

The first few times you pump are practice sessions. Don't worry about how much you get, just give yourself time to get used to pumping.

In time, the amount of milk will vary, depending on the time of the day, the age and condition of your baby.

Full-term newborns take between 1 1/2 to 3 ounces per feed. By 4 weeks, babies take an average of about 4 ounces per feed.

Mothers often make more milk than a pump will get out, so the amount of milk you pump may not reflect how much milk you have. Pumps do not express milk as well as babies do.

How Do I Store My Milk?

Store in bags designed for freezing human milk, or in glass bottles. Fill bottles 3/4 full when freezing milk. Date the bags or bottles. The tables on the next page outline different storage times.

For preterm or sick babies (in the NICU):

| Where | Freshly Expressed Breast Milk | Frozen Breast Milk | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------|
| | | Thawed in fridge | Warmed |
| Room Temperature (20°C) | Up to 4 hours (refrigerate right away if not used) | Up to 4 hours | |
| Refrigerator (0°C to 4°C) | Up to 48 hours | Up to 24 hours | Up to 4 hours |
| Fridge Freezer (-18°C to 20°C) | Ideally 1 month, up to 3 months | Do not refreeze | |
| Deep freezer (Greater than -20°C) | Up to 12 months | Do not refreeze | |

For full term or healthy babies:

| Where | Freshly Expressed Breast Milk | Frozen Breast Milk, thawed in the fridge |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Room Temperature (20°C) | Up to 6 hours (refrigerate right away if not used) | Up to 4 hours |
| Refrigerator (0°C to 4°C) | Up to 5 days | Up to 24 hours |
| Fridge Freezer (-18°C to 20°C) | Up to 6 months | Do not refreeze |
| Deep freezer (Greater than -20°C) | Up to 12 months | Do not refreeze |

Is Expressed Milk Always the Same?

Breast milk looks different at different times. It can look clear and watery, or thicker. It can be bluish, yellow, or green-tinged. What you eat can affect the color.

There may be milk fat on the surface of refrigerated milk. Just shake it to mix it back in.

Frozen breast milk will taste and smell different than fresh milk, and will not be as good at destroying germs. However, frozen milk is still much better for your baby than formula!

What if I Have Sore Nipples?

You should not have sore nipples from pumping. If you do, see a breastfeeding expert.

If your nipples are already sore:

- Use warm compresses and/or massage to start milk flowing.
- Pump more often, but for a shorter time.
- Start on the least sore side and switch after let-down occurs.

If it still hurts, lightly pinch the tubing or unscrew the bottle slightly to decrease suction.

Using a Breast Pump



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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

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When to use a Breast Pump

A baby who is feeding effectively is a mother's best pump, but sometimes a breast pump can be helpful.

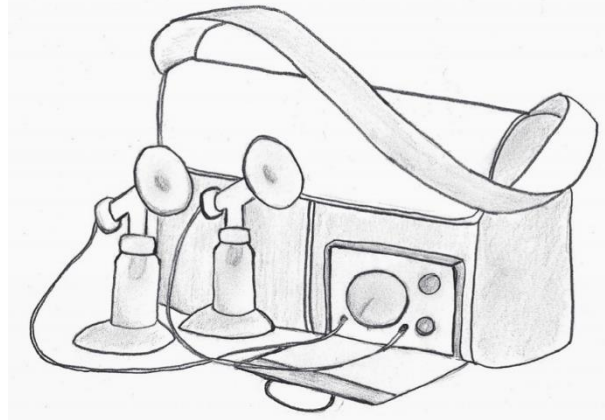
- To relieve severe engorgement (if breasts are too full for baby to latch).
- To help draw out flat or inverted nipples (right before baby nurses).
- To store up extra breast milk.
- To rest **very** sore nipples and allow them to heal.
- To empty the breast if baby is not breastfeeding well.
- To start, maintain or increase milk supply if mom and baby are apart.

Note: When you are still producing colostrum, you need to hand express into a teaspoon before pumping.

Types of Breast Pumps

Manual breast pumps are helpful for short term or occasional use.

Rental electric pumps are a better choice for long term use. They are more effective in keeping up your milk supply, and save time. Double pumping will take about 10 to 15 minutes.



How to use a Breast Pump

Like breastfeeding, pumping is a learned skill. Many mothers only get a few drops of milk the first time they try. It may take a few minutes before your milk begins to flow. Be patient. With practice, pumping will get easier.

Wash your hands with soap before handling equipment or pumping.

Get comfortable. Sit with your shoulders relaxed and your back and feet supported. Have everything you need within reach, including a drink.

Relax, think of your baby and listen to music. Lean forward and massage your breasts to help get your milk going (milk "let-down").

Follow the directions that came with your pump.

Start with suction on **lowest** setting. Hold the breast shield against your breast, making sure your nipple is centered in the shield and moves freely. If your nipple rubs against the sides of the shield, get a larger one. Start pumping; if pump is working correctly, you will see your nipple moving in and out.

Quick short pulses at the start are stimulating and imitate the way a baby starts breastfeeding. Once your milk is flowing, **longer steady pulses** are more effective.

Once milk starts to flow, you may increase the suction if this is an option for your pump. Be careful not to have the suction so high that your nipple hurts. **Pumping should be done at the highest setting without being painful.** Use a hand to massage and compress your breast while pumping to get the most milk.

Pump until milk stops dripping, and then switch sides. Finish your pumping session with hand expression to get even more milk (see Baby's Best Chance p. 106).

After Pumping

After each use, take the pump apart and wash all pump parts in warm soapy water, rinse well and air dry upside down on a clean towel.

Boil the pump parts that have contact with milk for 10 minutes daily if your baby is preterm or ill. Make sure all parts are covered by water.