

Breast Pumping to Develop and Keep Up Your Milk Supply

Aberdeen Hospital

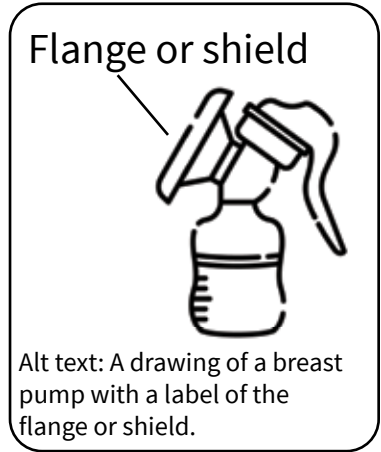
Breast Pumping to Develop and Keep Up Your Milk Supply

- Before you give birth, your body starts making milk for your baby. Breast milk has:
 - › antibodies that protect your baby against infection.
 - › stem cells that help your baby grow and develop.
 - › parts that kill cancer cells.
- Massaging your breasts releases hormones that can help your breasts make milk.
- While you and your baby learn how to breastfeed (or chestfeed), it is important to:
 - › put your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible.
 - › hand express your colostrum (breast milk made during your pregnancy and for the first few days after your baby's birth) or breast milk, if you are able.
- Skin-to-skin and massaging your breasts toward the nipples helps your uterus (womb) to shrink and lowers your bleeding after birth. This helps your body heal faster after giving birth.

How do I develop my milk supply?

- During your hospital stay, you may need to use a breast pump to boost your milk supply. To use a breast pump:

1. Always wash your hands before pumping. This keeps germs from getting into the milk. If you need help, please ask your nurse.
 2. Gently massage your breasts before and during pumping. This will help the milk flow.
 3. Put your nipple in the centre of the flange or shield.
 4. Start the pump on low pressure (suction). Slowly turn up the pressure until you feel a deep pulling sensation. **Only use the highest setting if it feels comfortable. Pumping should not hurt or pinch.**
 5. After you pump, let the pump run for a few minutes to dry.
- Depending on the size of your nipples, you may need a bigger flange or shield. Ask your nurse or lactation (breastfeeding) specialist to help you find the right size.



How often should I pump?

- If you are able to put your baby to your breast or hand express, pump every 2 to 3 hours during the day and at least once during the night. This is as often as your baby would breastfeed, about 8 to 10 times in 24 hours (1 day).
- Pumping helps your body release a hormone called prolactin. Prolactin tells your body to make more milk. The amount of prolactin in your body is highest at night. Pumping at least once during the night helps your body to make more milk.
- The number of times you pump in 24 hours is more important than the amount of time between pumping.
- Pump each breast for at least 15 to 25 minutes.
- As you pump, watch for the milk to slow down or stop. Turn off the pump, then restart it. This will cause your breast to release more milk. Keep pumping for a few minutes more.
- **Your breasts should feel empty after each pumping session.** Empty breasts tell your body to make more milk. Full breasts tell your body to make less milk.

What is let-down?

- Let-down is a sudden flow of milk in response to your hormones and nervous system. This can make pumping easier.
- Let-down is more likely to happen if you are relaxed. To encourage let-down:
 - › Take a warm shower.
 - › Place warm packs (like a Magic Bag® or a hot water bottle) on your breasts.
 - › Find a comfortable place to pump (like a chair, couch, or bed).
 - › Use pillows for good back support.
 - › Keep supplies where you can reach them.
 - › Have a glass of water nearby.
 - › Listen to relaxing music.
 - › Look at your baby or a picture of them.

How do I keep up my milk supply?

- It is important to pump right after you have nursed your baby.
- Write down the amount of milk you pump each time, so you will know how much you are making.
- Pumping less often can cause you to make less milk.

- Make sure you empty your breasts each time you pump.
- Holding your baby skin-to-skin can encourage them to breastfeed and boost your milk supply.

Where can I pump at the hospital?

- You can use the breast pump that is in your room.
- There is a breast-pumping room on the Women and Children's Unit. Ask your nurse how to get to the unit.
- You can rent or buy a breast pump from most drugstores (like Lawtons Drugs).

How do I store my milk?

- Use freshly pumped milk for your baby's next feeding, if you can.
- **If your baby does not use the milk within 1 hour**, pour it into a clean, plastic container. Ask your nurse for containers.
- Label the container with your baby's name, the date, and the time.

- Ask your nurse for labels printed with your baby's name, and check to make sure they are correct. **This is important so staff can make sure they are giving the right milk to the right baby.**
- Always store your milk in the back of the fridge or freezer (where the temperature is coldest and does not change as much).
- When you bring milk to the hospital, keep it in a small cooler with ice or ice packs.

How long is it safe to use the milk?

This depends on where you store your milk.

Milk stored in:	Safe for:
Fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › 3 to 5 days (fresh) › 24 hours (thawed)
Fridge freezer (separate door)	3 to 6 months
Deep freezer (below -19 °C)	6 to 12 months

How do I thaw and warm the milk?

- **Always use the oldest milk first.** Thaw frozen milk by putting the container in the fridge. Once all of the ice is melted, label the container with the date and time it was thawed.
- You can also thaw your milk by placing the container in lukewarm water. If you will not be using the milk right away, label it and put it in the fridge while it is still cold.
- Babies will often take cold milk, but if it needs to be warmed, place the container in a cup of warm water for 1 to 2 minutes.
 - › **Do not** let water cover the lid of the container. This is so that no water can get into the container.

Do not thaw or warm breast milk in the microwave. Microwaving lowers the milk's ability to fight infections. It can also cause hot areas of milk that can burn your baby.

How do I clean the pump?

- Each pump kit comes with instructions for cleaning the pump.
- **Always use clean parts each time you pump.** This will help to keep germs from getting into the milk.
- If you are using a pump that is used by others, clean the pump motor with disinfectant wipes before each use. Wear disposable gloves to keep disinfectant off of your hands and breasts.

To clean the pump:

1. Ask your nurse for a plastic basin to wash and store your pump kit parts in.
2. Separate the parts of the pump that come into contact with milk.
3. Rinse these parts in cool water to remove the milk protein.
4. Then, wash these parts in warm, soapy water with a mild, liquid detergent.
5. Rinse the parts in clear water.
6. Place the parts on a clean towel or paper towels to air dry. Cover the parts with another towel.

7. Sterilize (remove germs) the pump parts each day by:
- › using a Quick Clean™ bag in the microwave. You can find these bags at most drugstores in the baby section.
- OR**
- › following the manufacturer's instructions.

What else do I need to know?

- To keep up your milk supply, stay healthy by getting enough rest and eating well.
- Eat healthy foods. You need to eat up to 500 calories more a day than before you were pregnant.
 - › For example, a sandwich and a glass of milk is about 500 calories.
- Drink enough to satisfy your thirst. You are drinking enough if your urine (pee) is pale yellow. **It is very important to drink enough each day.** Water is best.
- While bathing or showering, **wash your breasts with water only.** Soap or lotion may dry or irritate the skin on your breasts. Pat your breasts dry. **Do not** rub.
- If your nipples are irritated, you can use lanolin. You can find this at most drugstores in the baby section.

- When your baby is ready to go home, take your milk with you. Ask your nurse to check if you have any milk in the fridge or the freezer.
- After you go home, you will have at least 1 follow-up visit at the Post Natal Clinic at the hospital. If you need help, please call the Clinic:
 - › Phone: 902-752-7600 ext. 2530

Questions?

If you have any questions while you are in the hospital, please ask your nurse or lactation specialist.

If you have questions after your baby goes home:

- Call the Post Natal Clinic.
 - › Phone: 902-752-7600 ext. 2530

OR

- Make an appointment with a Public Health Nurse.
 - › Phone: 902-752-5151

OR

- Make an appointment with your baby's primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner).

La Leche League Canada is an organization that gives information and support to people who are breastfeeding or chestfeeding.

- For more information, visit:
 - › www.lllc.ca/
- Lindsay Corbin
 - › Phone: 902-759-2634
 - › Email: lindsay.corbin@lllc.ca
- Sue Arsenault
 - › Phone: 902-485-2530
 - › Phone (cell): 902-759-5303
 - › Email: sue.arsenault@llc.ca

Ask for help if:

- You have breast pain.
- Pumping hurts.
- You are worried about your milk supply.

Resources

- › www.nshealth.ca/parenting-supports

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.