



Patient & Family Guide
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Breast Pumping to Develop and Keep Up Your Milk Supply

Aberdeen Hospital



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Breast Pumping to Develop and Keep Up Your Milk Supply

Breast pumping in the hospital

- Before giving birth, your body has already started making breast milk for your baby. Massaging your breasts releases hormones that help with milk production.
- Sometimes moms and babies need time to learn how to breastfeed. During this time, it is important to put your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible and hand express your colostrum (breast milk that your body makes during your pregnancy and for the first few days after your baby's birth) or breast milk, if you are able. During your hospital stay, you may need to use a breast pump to increase your milk supply.
- Breast stimulation (massaging the breast toward the nipple) and skin-to-skin helps your uterus (womb) to shrink and lowers bleeding. This helps your body to heal faster after giving birth. Breast milk has:
 - › antibodies that protect your baby against infection.
 - › stem cells that repair your baby's body.
 - › components that kill cancerous cells.

How do I develop my milk supply?

- Before pumping, wash your hands to keep germs from getting into the milk. If you need help, please ask the nurse.
- Before and during pumping, gently massage your breasts to help the milk flow.
- Put your nipple in the centre of the flange/shield.
- Start the pump on low pressure. Slowly turn up the pressure (suction) so that you feel a deep pulling sensation. **Use only the highest setting if it feels comfortable.**
- **Pumping should not hurt or pinch.** Depending on the size of your nipples, you may need a bigger shield for the pump. Your nurse or lactation consultant can 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).
- When you pump, you are helping your body release the hormone prolactin. This hormone tells your body to make more milk. Since this hormone is highest at night, pumping at least once during the night helps your body to produce more milk.
- The number of times you pump in 24 hours is more important than the amount of time between pumping.
- Pump for at least 15 to 25 minutes per breast.
- As you make more milk, watch for it to slow down or stop. Then restart the pump to trigger more milk release and pump for another few minutes.
- **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 the sudden rushing down of the milk in response to your hormones and nervous system. Let-down is also called the “milk ejection reflex.”
- Relaxation is the key to let-down. Let-down is easier if you are not tired or stressed. Here are some ways to help with let-down:
 - › Take a warm shower.
 - › Place warm packs (such as a Magic Bag® or hot water bottle) on your breasts.
 - › Find a comfortable place to pump, such as a chair, couch, or bed.
 - › Use pillows for good back support.
 - › Keep supplies within easy reach.
 - › Have a glass of water nearby.
 - › Listen to relaxing music.
 - › Look at your baby or their picture.

How do I keep up my milk supply?

- It is important to pump right after you have nursed your baby.
- Keep track of the amounts you pump, as pumping less often can cause you to produce less milk.

- Be sure to empty your breasts each time you pump.
- Skin-to-skin contact can encourage your baby to breastfeed. Holding your baby skin-to-skin can also increase your milk supply.

Where can I pump at the hospital?

- There is a breast pump in your room that you can use.
- There is also a breast-pumping room on the Women and Children's Unit of the hospital. Ask your nurse for the location.
- You can rent or buy a breast pump from a drugstore (such as Lawtons Drugs). You can also borrow one from the hospital or the Kids First Family Resource Centre:
 - › 110 Provost Street, New Glasgow,
Nova Scotia
 - › Phone: 902-755-5437
- Write down the amount of milk you pump each time, so you will know how much you are producing.

How do I store my milk?

- Use freshly pumped milk for your baby's next feeding, when possible.
- If your baby does not use the milk within 1 hour, pour it into a clean plastic container provided by the hospital.
- 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 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 cool in a small cooler with ice or ice packs.

How long is it safe to use the milk?

This depends on where you store the milk.

Milk stored in:	Safe for:
Fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› 3 to 5 days (if fresh)› 24 hours (1 day) (if thawed)
Fridge freezer (separate door)	3 to 6 months
Deep freezer (lower than -19 ° C)	6 to 12 months

Thawing and warming breast milk

- Always use the oldest milk first. Thaw frozen milk by putting the container in the fridge. Once all of the ice crystals are melted, label the container with date and time it was thawed.
- Babies will often take cold milk, but if it needs to be defrosted, place in a cup of warm water for a minute or 2.

- Do not let water cover the lid of the container.
- You may also thaw milk by placing the container in lukewarm water. If you won't be using the milk right away, label it and put it in the fridge while it is still cold.

Do not thaw or warm breast milk in the microwave. Microwaving lowers the infection-fighting ability of the milk. Microwaving can also cause hot areas of milk that can burn your baby.

Time of day	Minutes of pumping	Amount of milk (ounces or ml)
Total:		

How do I clean the pump kit?

- Each pump kit comes with instructions for cleaning the pump and pump kit.
- Only use clean parts for each pumping to prevent germs from getting into your 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.

Note: After pumping, let the pump run for a few minutes to dry.

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

- Get enough rest and stay healthy to keep up your milk supply.
- Eat healthy foods. Your body may need up to 500 calories more a day than before you were pregnant. A sandwich and a glass of milk is about 500 calories.

- Drink enough water to satisfy your thirst. You are drinking enough if your urine (pee) is pale yellow. **It is VERY important to stay well-hydrated.**
- While bathing or showering, **wash your breasts with water only** and pat dry. Do not use soap or lotion on your breasts. They may dry or irritate the skin. If your nipples are irritated, you can use lanolin. You can find this at the grocery store in the baby section.
- When your baby is ready to go home, ask the nurse to check the freezer for any of your milk so you can take it home.
- You will have at least one followup visit at the Post Natal Clinic at the hospital after going home. If you need help, please call the Clinic:
 - › Phone: 902-752-7600 ext. 2530

Questions?

- If you have any questions while in hospital, please ask the nurse or lactation (breastfeeding) specialist.

If you have any concerns after your baby goes home:

- Call the Post Natal Clinic at the hospital:
 - › 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 doctor or nurse practitioner (NP).

- La Leche League International is also available to support breastfeeding mothers.
 - › Lindsay Corbin
 - › Phone: 902-695-2634
 - › Sue Arsenault
 - › Phone: 902-485-2530

When should I ask for help?

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

Resources for families

- www.nshealth.ca/publications/public-health

