

How Do I Use a Breast Pump and Store My Breast Milk?

Expressing breast milk with frequency is the key to stimulating and maintaining a good milk supply. Your pumping routine should simulate your baby's feeding schedule as closely as possible. If you are pumping while at work, you will need to express your milk when your baby would usually feed if you were together. If you are the mother of a premature or hospitalized infant, you will need to pump every 3-4 hours (even at night time) until your baby is ready to begin breastfeeding. Check with your baby's health care provider to see if there are any special instructions.

Preparing to Pump

Wash your hands thoroughly. Make yourself comfortable with your back and shoulders well supported. Have everything you need within reach.

Your success with pumping depends on your milk "let-down", which is your body's response to stimulation of your nipples. This happens easily when you are breastfeeding your baby. There is a release of hormones that cause contractions of the milk glands and allows your milk to flow easily.



To help stimulate this release, try to massage your breasts or apply warm compresses before pumping. You can also try to gently rub your nipples, think of your baby, or imagine your baby in your arms. Look at a picture of your baby, smell baby smells (baby powder or clothing your baby has worn), or listen to audio tapes of

your baby or relaxing music. The more relaxed you are, the more milk you will be able to pump.



Using a pump with a double milk collection kit enables you to express milk from both breasts at the same time. This is especially effective for mothers who have limited time available for pumping breaks, or who must pump frequently. "Double pumping" reduces pumping time and stimulates milk production more effectively.

Beginning to Pump

Read the instructions that accompany your pump and milk collection kit before you begin.

Center the breast flange over your nipple. Start your pump. Your nipple should begin to move in and out without rubbing against the sides of the flange. If the breast flange feels too tight, a larger flange may be available for your collection kit.

If you can adjust your pump's suction, start on the lowest setting. Gradually increase the suction to the highest level at which you are comfortable. Pumping should not be painful! If you experience any pain, decrease the suction level until it feels more comfortable.

Some milk collection kits come with reducing inserts that fit into the pump flange to make the nipple opening smaller. Some mothers find they get more milk if they use the insert for part of the pumping session, and then remove it from the flange. That stimulates the areola differently and may result in more let-down reflexes.

How Long Should I Pump?

Pump about 15-20 minutes per breast when using a single milk collection kit. Switch to your other breast when your milk flow decreases, or about every 5 minutes. If using a double milk collection kit, pump for 10-15 minutes. Continue to pump even as your milk flow slows down. If you relax and breath deeply you will probably get another let-down reflex and the milk flow should improve. This can happen several times before your breasts are drained.

If using a manually operated breast pump, such as the Ameda One-Hand Breast Pump, begin with quick, short squeezes to simulate the way a baby begins the feeding. Once your let-down reflex occurs and the milk is flowing freely, transition to a "squeeze-and-hold" rhythm as it can be more effective and less tiring.

After each use, completely disassemble your milk collection kit and wash all of the parts that come in contact with your milk in hot, soapy water. Rinse with hot water and allow to air dry.

Your milk collection kit does not need to be sterilized unless your health care provider or hospital policy recommends it. Carefully follow the instructions included with your milk collection kit on how to sanitize the product.

When is a Good Time to Pump?

Mothers generally find that they can pump the most milk first thing in the morning. You may have many reasons you may need to use a breast pump.

- ♥ Your baby has not completely emptied your breasts
- ♥ Increase your milk supply
- ♥ Temporarily away from your baby

Practice Makes . . . More Milk!

Whatever happens, don't get discouraged if you get very little milk the first time you pump. Effectiveness improves with practice. The amount you pump also depends on the age of your baby, your baby's weight, how long since your breasts were emptied, the time of day, your stress level, and how established your milk supply is. A vigorously breastfeeding baby can always get more milk from your breast than even the very best breast pump!

Storing Breast Milk

- ♥ Fresh breast milk can be stored in plastic or glass containers or special mother's milk freezer bags. Inexpensive plastic bottle liners or bags are not intended for long term or freezer storage. Ameda Mother's Milk Freezer Bags have two layers of plastic and a layer of nylon to prevent contamination of the milk and resist punctures or splitting of the bag in the freezer.
- ♥ Always place your milk in the coldest part of your freezer away from the door which is frequently opened. If you have more than a few bags in your freezer, it may help to keep them stored in a container to keep the frozen bags from sliding around.
- ♥ You may add freshly expressed milk to containers of refrigerated or frozen breast milk if the new milk is chilled first.
- ♥ Freeze milk in small "feeding sized" quantities (1-3 ounce quantities) to minimize waste. Thawed milk that is not used within 24 hours must be discarded.

- ♥ Using a sticky label or non-toxic marker, label the container with the date and time you pumped. Add your baby's name if you are taking the milk to a day care provider or to the hospital.

Other Tips

- ♥ Always use your oldest stored breast milk first.
- ♥ The best way to thaw frozen milk is in the refrigerator overnight. If it is needed sooner, place it in a bowl of lukewarm water or under cool running water, until the milk is thawed. The "fat" will rise to the top of the container. Gently swirl the milk to mix the layers that have separated. Never vigorously shake breast milk.
- ♥ Never use hot water to thaw breast milk and never use the microwave to thaw or heat breast milk. "Hot spots" can develop while in the microwave that can scald your baby's mouth during feedings. Microwaves will also alter the composition of breast milk.
- ♥ Pour the amount of breast milk you think your baby will take into your feeding bottle or container. Use a conservative estimate because any breast milk that is not consumed during that feeding must be discarded. You can always get a bit more breast milk if needed.

Storage Time for Breast Milk*	Deep Freeze Chest Freezer (0°F or Less)	Refrigerator Style Self Contained Freezer (Approx. 0°F)	Refrigerator (32°F-39°F)	Room Temperature (66°F-72°F)
Fresh Breast Milk	6+ Months	3-4 Months	8 Days	24 Hours (Colostrum) 10-12 Hours (Mature Milk)
Thawed Breast Milk	Do Not Refreeze	Do Not Refreeze	24 Hours	1 Hour

*For healthy, full-term babies. Storage times may vary for premature or sick babies.

Source: La Leche League International

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Please remember that this is general breastfeeding information only and does not replace the advice of your health care provider. If you have a problem that you are unable to resolve quickly, seek help immediately.

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References on File.

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