

Milk Expression for the Nursing Mother

Volume 9 , Issue 1

January 2004



Give the Best

Nat'l Naval Medical Ctr
Lactation Support Team
8901 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20889

Need more help?

If you have additional questions about breast-feeding or the services offered through the Lactation Support Program, Please call our office weekdays between 0800-1400

Call: 301-319-5033 or
301-295-9959

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It takes training and practice to pump for quantity. Ask for help in selecting a good quality pump or with learning how to hand express.

1. Three basics of pumping for quantity are:
 - a. Pump every 2-3 hours during the waking hours and every 3-4 at night.
 - b. Switch sides during pumping or if you are using a double pump, stop midway through the pumping session and massage the breasts again. A combination of hand expression, pumping and massage is most efficient.
 - c. Pump regularly, don't skip days without it.
2. Before pumping, use warm, moist compresses – warm washcloths or disposable baby diapers saturated with warm water. Take a warm shower, immerse breasts in warm water, or just wet fingers with warm water before hand expressing.
3. Stimulate the nipples and massage breasts before pumping. Rub with the flat of your hand or try rolling the nipples gently between your fingers. Stimulate one nipple while pumping the other.
4. Wet the pump flange (helps seal and lubricate- warm water or drops of milk)
5. If you are using a hand pump or hand expression, pump with rhythm. Mimic baby's pattern with pauses in between pumping.
6. If your baby is at the breast, pump the other side while the baby nurses (this is the best way to get the most milk in the shortest amount of time and to learn to have a let-down with the pump)
7. Drink or eat when pumping to condition a let down.
8. Use a warm compress (sock full of rice warmed in the microwave) in the middle of your lower back. Have someone rub your back or shoulders.
9. Use all of your senses to imagine your baby (touch, smell, sight, hearing)
 - a. Imagine holding the baby in your arms
 - b. Hold the baby's blanket, toy or clothing (something that *smells* like baby)
 - c. Look at a picture of your baby
 - d. Call your caregiver before pumping to see how the baby is doing
 - e. Listen to music or a recording of your baby's voice
 - f. Read baby and parenting literature while you pump
 - g. Imagine your milk flowing
10. At the end of the pumping session, massage breasts and hand express the last few teaspoons of hindmilk into your container. This milk is high in calories.

If you are just beginning to pump for a hospitalized infant, remember it takes time to *learn* to pump and it takes time to bring your milk supply up. Take care of yourself, eat and drink well to keep your energy up, and be patient. If you are concerned that your supply has gone down after pumping well for a week or so, don't despair, it can increase again with more frequent pumping. If you are concerned, please call our lactation support team:

Promote, Protect, Support Breastfeeding

