

Gentle Hands-On Pumping Helps Make More Milk

Some people struggle to make enough milk for their baby. This is often true when your baby is not able to fully nurse and you need to use a breast pump. When you combine hands on pumping and massage you can increase milk volume by 48%.

What is gentle hands-on pumping?

Gentle hands-on pumping is a method that helps the breast drain each time you pump. This leads to more milk and more of the fatty hind milk that your baby needs to grow.

How do I perform gentle hands-on pumping?

- Start pumping with a hospital grade pump as soon as you can after your baby is born.
- Pump 8 or more times every 24 hours, **even during the night**.
- **Gently massage** your breasts before pumping to help with let-down. Massage using small circles. Pay extra attention to the outer part of the breast/chest near the arm pits.
- Roughly massaging, squeezing, or kneading your breasts can cause swelling and injury. Swelling can lead to blockages in milk flow. Massage your breasts only as firmly as you would pet a cat.

- **Stroke** from the outside in toward the nipples. Use a light touch to relax and help with your let down.
- Start your pump. Pump and keep using gentle massage. A hands-free pumping bra makes this easier.
- Adjust the suction to the highest level that is comfortable for you. It should not hurt! If you feel pain with pumping, ask to see the lactation consultant or nurse.
- Some people spray milk, some just drip. Both are normal and ok. Keep pumping until the sprays/drips slow down or stop.
- Finish by single pumping with more gentle massage or hand expressing. Alternate sides and focus on firm or lumpy areas.
- You are finished when the breasts feel soft and well drained.

Where can I learn more about hands-on pumping?

For a video of gentle hands-on pumping follow the link below:

<https://vimeo.com/291806551>

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7498