

# PUMPING BREASTMILK

Providing breastmilk is important to give your newborn a healthy start. Breastmilk provides the best nutrition for growth, development, and offers protection from many illnesses. In the first few days, the milk is called colostrum or “liquid gold.” Every drop is precious and should be fed to your infant if possible or stored for future use.

## Establishing breastmilk using a pump

The best way to establish a good milk supply is to pump as often as a newborn eats, typically 8 or more times in 24 hours. The more often milk is removed from the breast, the better the milk supply. Initially, the pump may not remove anything, but its purpose is to stimulate the breasts to make milk. The amount expressed starts out as drops in the first few days, increasing to ounces by days 3 to 5 after delivery. When pumping is going well, expect a full milk supply of about 24 ounces (720ml)/day by 2 weeks after delivery.

When a baby is admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), it is recommended to rent a hospital grade electric breast pump at least until the baby’s due date plus one month.

## Instructions for pumping

1. Begin pumping as soon as possible after delivery. The hospital will provide a pump for you during your hospital stay.
2. Massage your breasts before and during pumping to stimulate more milk production and to provide more comfort.
3. Relax and allow 20 to 30 minutes of quiet time when pumping.
4. Pump 8 or more times every 24 hours, making sure to pump often enough to keep your breasts from becoming overly full. Full breasts make less milk.
5. In the first few days, pump both breasts at the same time (double pump) for 15 minutes, then hand express for 2 to 5 minutes to empty your breasts as much as possible.
6. When your milk supply increases by day 3 to 5, pump at least 2 minutes past the time milk stops flowing.
7. It is important during the first 2 weeks, and any time your milk supply is low, to pump at night.
8. A hands-free pumping bra or wearable collection cups that attach to many types of pumps may be helpful for more long-term pumping. Be sure these accessories keep the pump flanges firmly around your breasts to maintain suction, but not too tight to indent the breasts, which would interfere with milk removal. Always ensure a proper fit and positioning of the pump flanges to ensure emptying of the breasts. Massage your breasts during pumping if using hands-free bra to remove as much milk as possible.

## If the pump does not appear to be pumping well enough

- Ensure all connections are tight
- Ensure the small white membrane is flat against the yellow valve and is not torn
- Try switching the flanges to the opposite breasts
- Have the pump checked by a member of the lactation team
- Consider renting a hospital grade pump

## Cleaning the pump parts

1. Wash hands before handling the breast pump, pump kit and storage containers
2. Wash all pump parts (the parts that touch the breasts and milk, not the tubing) as soon as possible after pumping
3. Wash pump parts in a basin or under running warm water, not directly in the sink
  - In the hospital use the soapy cloth towelette and create friction to clean the parts
  - At home you may use any dish soap
4. Rinse each piece well under running warm water
5. Shake the pieces to remove excess water and towel dry or put on a clean, dry towel to air dry (in the hospital, bring clean pump parts out of the bathroom to air dry)
6. In addition to cleaning the parts after each use, sanitize the pump parts once daily at home, following the manufacturer's instructions
7. If there is moisture in the tubing, run the pump with tubing attached, open to air for 3 to 4 minutes or until dry

## Collecting and storing breastmilk for hospitalized infants

1. Obtain containers, caps and labels from the nurse/lactation consultant to use while in the hospital.
2. Put milk from each pumping session in its own container and place a cap on it.
3. Write the date and time of milk collection on the label and place a label on each container of milk. Unlabeled breastmilk will not be given to the infant.
4. Breastmilk is to be stored as follows:

Method	Term Infant	NICU Admission & Late Preterm Infant
Room Temperature	4 hours	4 hours*
Refrigerator	4 days	4 days
Freezer Compartment (1-door refrigerator)	2 weeks	Not recommended
Freezer (2-door refrigerator – not in the door)	4 months	3 months
Deep Freezer	12 months	6 months

\* Refrigerate as soon as possible, holding at room temperature no longer than 4 hours.

## Transporting breastmilk

1. Put the breastmilk on ice in a cooler
2. Breastmilk must be kept frozen (if frozen) and cold (if refrigerated)

