

How To Use A Breast Pump

Just like breast feeding, pumping is a skill that you learn. When first trying a breast pump, most mothers are only able to express a few drops of milk. With the proper practice and knowledge, the mother will be more efficient at pumping.

Preparing the breast pump

1. Read all the instructions in the kit very carefully.
2. Every part of the breast pump will need to be sterilized before you begin using it.
3. After use, all the parts of the pump will need to be washed in warm, soapy water, then rinsed with hot water and drained on a clean towel. The plastic tubing doesn't need to be cleaned unless you get milk into it. If you do wash it, it should be hung to allow time to dry and drain thoroughly.
4. If your doctor feels the need, the entire kit can be sterilized every day.
5. When you first start with an electric pump, the suction level should be on the lowest possible setting.

Getting started

- Warm compresses, gentle massages of the breast and gentle nipple stimulation will help to stimulate a quick let down.
- You should always relax while doing breast massages during pumping. Some mothers prefer to close their eyes then think about nursing the baby, imagining the baby in their arms. The more relaxed a mother is, the better let down she'll have and the more milk will be dispensed.
- Your first attempts at pumping should be considered practice sessions with learning to use the breast pump as the goal, not how much milk is actually dispensed.
- When you use a hand pump, quick, short pumps at the start is stimulating and will imitate more closely the way a baby breast feeds. Once the let down occurs and milk starts to flow freely,

long, steadier strokes are more effective and less tiring.

- When you learn to pump, you should practice for 5 minutes on a side at least once or twice a day. Always pick the least stressful part of your day for pumping.

Relaxing and realizing that the pump is your friend is the single most important thing that a mother can do. There are several things that a mother can do to help herself relax, such as putting a picture of the baby on the pump, playing cards or a game with friends, watching television, read books, or talk on the phone. Simply watching the collection bottle is not helpful and will probably put more stress on you than you actually need.

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