



# BREASTPUMPING BASICS

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## WHEN TO PUMP

When should you pump if you're home with your baby and fully breastfeeding? Here are some tips you may find helpful:

- Try pumping in the morning. Most women get more milk then.
- Pump 30-60 minutes after a nursing and at least an hour before a nursing. This leaves plenty of milk for your baby at the next feeding.

If your baby wants to breastfeed right after a pumping, go ahead. Some babies are patient and feed longer to get the milk they need. Just keep going back and forth from breast to breast until your baby is done. If you are pumping for a baby who is not breastfeeding, plan to pump 8-10 times each day. Go no longer than 5 hours between pumpings until you are pumping a full milk supply (750ml–1050ml per day). After that, if you can sleep for an 8-hour stretch without too much breast fullness, go ahead.

## PUMPING TIPS

### Centre nipples in tunnel

Make sure your nipples are not rubbing against the sides, top or bottom. If your nipples rub no matter how they're positioned, you may need a breast flange with a larger diameter nipple tunnel.

### Keep air seal around breast flanges

Hold the shields firmly to your breasts to form an air seal, but also make sure they're not digging into your breasts.

### Angle breast flanges downward

Make sure the tunnels are pointing down so the milk flows into the bottle and not back at you!

### Suction/vacuum should be at a comfortable setting

If the pump suction is too high, you'll tense up and your milk won't flow. If you're gritting your teeth, the suction is too high.

### Experiment with control knobs

If your pump has two knobs, milk may flow more quickly at the highest speed setting at first. You can leave it on the highest setting throughout the pumping, or slow it down to mimic the longer, slower gulping of a baby. Or, try alternating between high cycles to trigger let-down and low cycles to drain.

### Double pump one-handed

Free up one hand by using this simple trick. Position the first flange at your breast, then use the arm next to that breast and brace the flange against your forearm near the elbow. Use the free hand of that arm to put the other breast flange in place. Now you have one hand free to talk on the phone or eat a meal!

### Pump 10-15 minutes per breast

When using a double pump, this is 10-15 minutes total. If you're still getting lots of milk at 15 minutes, you can keep going. If your milk flow stops at 8 minutes, you can stop at 10 minutes.

### When to pump

Typically, most women get more milk in the morning or late in the day. A good time to pump is 30-60 minutes after nursing and at least an hour before nursing. Try not to pump right before nursing, or your milk flow may be very slow for the baby.

### How much milk to expect

How much milk you can pump will vary. These are some of the factors:

- **Your baby's age.** When breastfeeding is going well, you make more milk at one month than at one week.
- **Time since your last breastfeeding or pumping.**
- **Time of day.** Most mums pump more milk in the morning.
- **Pump quality.**
- **How much practice you've had with your pump.**
- **Your mood.** If you're relaxed, you'll likely be able to pump more milk than if you're stressed.

If you are fully breastfeeding, here are some averages:

- If you pump between breast feedings, expect about half a feeding.
- If you pump for a missed breastfeeding, expect a full feeding.



Feeding amounts will vary by your baby's age. During the first week, a feeding is about 30-60 ml. In weeks two to three, a feeding is about 60-90 ml. After week four, a feeding is about 90-120 ml.

Babies often take more milk from the bottle than you pump in one pumping session. This does NOT mean your milk supply is low.

The faster, steadier flow of the bottle may cause many babies to overfeed. When fed from the bottle, many babies feed less often. When fed at the breast, babies often feel full on less milk. These smaller, more frequent feedings promote healthy eating habits.

If your baby will be getting regular bottles, you may want to get the bottle with the slowest flow. A slower flow may help discourage overfeeding.

### How to Pump More Milk

To get more milk, you may not need strong suction. Set your pump at the highest suction that feels good and no higher. (If you're gritting your teeth, it's up too high! Pumping should not hurt.)

Pumping milk is not like sucking a drink through a straw. With a straw, the stronger you suck, the more you get. When pumping, most milk comes only when a let-down, or milk release, happens. Without a milk release, most milk stays in the breast.

What is a milk release?

- Hormones cause muscles in the breast to squeeze and the milk ducts to widen.
- This pushes the milk out of the breast.

Some mothers feel this as a tingling. Others feel nothing.

A milk release can happen with a touch at the breast, hearing a baby cry, or even just thinking about your baby. Feelings of stress, anger, or upset can block milk release. While breastfeeding, most mothers have three or four milk releases without knowing it.

**To get more milk with your pump, you need more milk releases.** But you may need some help at first until your body learns to respond to your pump like a baby. To trigger more milk releases, use your senses. One or two senses may work better than the others. Try them all to find out which work best for you.

- **Mind/Feelings:** Close your eyes, relax, and imagine your baby breastfeeding. Think about how much you love your baby.
- **Sight:** Look at your baby or your baby's photo.
- **Hearing:** Listen to a tape of your baby cooing or crying. If you're apart, call and check on your baby. Or call someone you love to relax and distract you.
- **Smell:** Smell your baby's blanket or clothing.
- **Touch:** Apply a warm cloth to your breasts or gently massage them.
- **Taste:** Sip your favourite warm, non-alcoholic drink to relax you.

If using an electric pump, check to see if your pump has both SUCTION (also called VACUUM) and CYCLE controls. If so, use your senses as you adjust the controls to get more milk faster. Use your milk flow as your guide while you pump.

- Set SUCTION/VACUUM to the highest setting that feels good.
- Set CYCLE on the fastest setting.
- When your milk starts flowing, turn CYCLE down near the slowest setting.
- When the milk flow slows to a trickle, return to fast CYCLE and use your senses.
- Repeat, using fast CYCLE to trigger milk releases and slow cycles to drain

If using a manual pump like the Ameda One-Hand Breast Pump you can do the same thing by using both fast and slow squeezes. Again, watch your milk flow and use it as your guide. Change breasts every 5-7 minutes. Pump for a total of 10-15 minutes per breast.

*This is general information and does not replace the advice of your physician or healthcare provider.  
If you have a problem you cannot solve quickly, seek help right away.  
Every baby is different, and your baby may not be average.  
If in doubt, contact your physician or other healthcare provider.*