

EIGHTEEN TIPS FOR BETTER PUMPING

Pumping milk is a skill, just like breastfeeding your baby. Here are some tips to help make pumping easier and to help you stimulate your milk ejection reflex, soothe sore nipples, pump more milk, and make pumping more convenient.

STIMULATING YOUR MILK EJECTION REFLEX

1. **Follow a set routine for pumping:** the place, the chair, the beverage. Get your equipment ready in the same way each time, use your mental tricks to relax, and pump. This routine conditions your milk ejection reflex.
2. **Try a few minutes of breast massage before you pump.** Start at the armpit and use the fingertips of your opposite hand to make small circles on the breast tissue in that one spot. Then move your hand slightly and do it again. Work your way around the breast and gradually down toward the areola in a spiral pattern. (This is similar to the breast exam that you or your doctor use to check for lumps.) Finish the massage with a series of long strokes from the chest wall down to the areola, again working your way around the entire breast. Then massage the other breast. If your milk flow slows down during a pumping session, a few minutes of breast massage may help get it going again.
3. **"Prime the pump."** Drink a couple glasses of water right before pumping.
4. **Get "pumped up" yourself.** Visualize flowing mountain streams or rivers running toward the ocean as you pump. Or imagine yourself as a fountain of milk--whatever image helps your milk to let down and spray into the pump.
5. **Look at a picture of your baby while you pump.** Bring along one of your baby's blankets or a piece of clothing. Enjoy your baby's smell on the fabric.
6. **Call the sitter and find out what your baby is doing right before you pump.**
7. **To minimize distractions while pumping, try using a personal tape player and headphones.** You can enjoy your favorite music while you pump, or listen to one of the tapes that feature sounds from nature: the ocean, the rain forest, whatever appeals to you.

SORE NIPPLES FROM PUMPING

8. **If pumping is making your nipples sore, try a lower suction setting.** Or try a different kind of pump. Be sure that the nipple is not rubbing against the flange as you pump.
9. **To soothe sore nipples after pumping and help them heal, apply a small amount of an emollient,** such as Lansinoh for Breastfeeding Mothers, to your nipples. Soften it between your fingers, then gently pat it onto the nipples.

PUMPING MORE MILK

10. **Pump as often as your baby nurses, usually every three hours.** If you're worried about producing enough milk, pump more *frequently*. This is more effective at stimulating the milk supply than pumping longer at each session.
11. **Add an extra pumping session in the early morning, when you have the most milk.** If you are trying to build up a supply of milk in the freezer, this is a good time of day to pump.
12. **If you're not pumping as much milk as you once did, check your pump.** Are you putting it together properly? Is a seal or some other part of it wearing out? Check with the manufacturer (there'll be a phone number in the printed instructions). If you bought or rented your pump from a lactation consultant or a La Leche League Leader, she may be able to advise you about replacing any parts that are worn.
13. **Try pumping on one breast while baby nurses at the other.** The baby will trigger the milk ejection reflex, and you'll be able to collect milk from the other breast more easily. (This is easier to do with an electric pump than with a hand-operated one.)
14. **For most women, double-pumping (pumping both breasts at the same time) yields more milk.** Prolactin levels in the blood are also higher when you pump both breasts simultaneously. Good-quality electric pumps are the best and easiest way to double-pump, but some manual breast pumps can be operated with one hand. Get two of these and you can double-pump manually.

15. **If pumping is not going well, try another pump**, preferably one that is a notch or two up the scale in quality from the one you are using. Rent a hospital-grade pump and try it for a week or two. You may be surprised at the difference!

CONVENIENCE

16. **Wear two-piece outfits with easy access to your breasts.** It's easiest to pump (just like it's easiest to nurse discreetly) if you're wearing a loose top that can be pulled up from the bottom. Investing in several good-looking nursing tops or blouses, with camouflaged openings at the breasts, can simplify both pumping and nursing.
17. **Leaning forward while you pump will prevent milk from dripping on your clothes.**
18. **Double-pump with one hand.** Try leaning into the desk or table holding the pump, using the edge of the furniture and one arm to hold the pump flanges to your breasts. You'll have a free hand for turning pages in a magazine or eating your lunch. Or try using a footstool or some thick book to raise your knees, so that you can rest the collecting bottles on your lap as you lean forward.