

Breast Milk Pumps

A breast pump may be needed to remove breast milk from mother's breasts. Choosing a pump that is appropriate for your situation can be confusing. If you have questions, call Niagara Region Public Health.

Getting Started with Pumping

- Wash hands thoroughly
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for assembly and use
- Sit comfortably
- Encourage the milk ejection reflex or 'let down' before pumping to increase milk flow and decrease pumping time (see 'Helping your Milk to Flow' below)
- Moisten breasts or breastshield with water to improve seal and suction
- Position the breastshield over the areola so the nipple is centred
- Your nipple should move freely and not rub against the sides of the breastshield tunnel; most manufacturers offer various sizes of breastshields
- Frequency and duration of pumping session depends on each mother's needs; average time is 10 – 20 minutes per breast
- Stop pumping when milk flow is minimal or has stopped
- Switch breasts several times during a session to stimulate more 'let downs'
- Breast massage while pumping may increase the amount of milk you are able to pump
- Experiment to find out which strategies work best
- If pumping is painful or causes damage to nipples or breasts, call Niagara Parentsto speak with a Public Health Nurse

Helping your Milk to Flow

- Stimulate 'let down' by: using warm compresses, massage, hand expression, visualizing baby, having scent of baby's clothing nearby, listening to music or by relaxing
- If 'let down' has not occurred, start pumping using short, quick pulls until you see milk
- After 'let down', use slower, gentle pulls to draw milk out

Cleaning of Equipment

- Pumping equipment should be cleaned according to manufacturer directions
- Clean, dry equipment should be kept covered when not in use

Types of Pumps

Hand operated / Manual pump

- Most affordable
- Appropriate for short-term or occasional use
- Intended for use after milk supply is established
- May be used to soften your areola if your breasts are engorged
- May be used temporarily if you are unable to tolerate breastfeeding due to painful, damaged and/or infected nipple(s)



Single electric pump

- Appropriate for short-term or occasional use
- Intended for use after milk supply is established
- May be used to soften your areola if your breasts are engorged
- May be used temporarily if you are unable to tolerate breastfeeding due to painful, damaged and/or infected nipple(s)



Double electric pump (for purchase)

- Appropriate for long-term or regular use
- May be used to help increase milk supply if necessary

May be used if breastfeeding is stopped for a lengthy period for any of the following reasons:

- if you are unable to tolerate breastfeeding due to painful, damaged and/or infected nipple(s)
- if you need to stop breastfeeding temporarily due to surgery or illness

Hospital-grade double electric pump (for rent)

- May be used to help increase milk supply if necessary
- Intended for use when baby is doing little or no feeding at the breast
- If you are a mother of a premature or ill baby who is unable to breastfeed, this is the most effective type of pump to increase or maintain milk supply



Connect with a public health
nurse at Niagara Parents



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Live Chat
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Niagara Parents