Let's Talk About...

Breastpumping while your baby is in the hospital

If you are not able to breastfeed your baby while your baby is in the hospital, you will need to use a breast-pump. If you pump as often as your baby would normally breastfeed, this will help bring in and keep a good milk supply. Remember to always wash your hands before pumping.

Are there breastpumps in the hospital?

Breastpumps are available for you while you are at the hospital. Talk to your baby's nurse about their location.

How often should I use the breastpump?

We recommend 15–20 minutes of pumping seven times in the daytime plus one more in the middle of the night. Pumping should not hurt. If pumping hurts or if you feel like the pump is not emptying the milk from your breast, you may need a larger size. Talk to your nurse or to the lactation specialist. Here is a pumping schedule sample:

- 3:00 a.m. 8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.
- 3:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m.

Many mother's find that setting exact times for pumping and staying on that schedule makes pumping easier. But you don't have to have a strict schedule. The main thing is to pump 8 times in 24 hours and fully empty the breast.

How much milk should I produce?

The goal is to produce 24 ounces of milk each day when your baby is 2-weeks-old. When your baby is one month old, you should produce 25 to 35 ounces each day. Once you have a full milk supply, you may decrease the number of pumpings each day.

How do I clean the pump kit after use?

First, rinse your supplies with cold water to remove the milk residue. Wash the kit with hot soapy water, and rinse it with clear water. Let it air dry. You only need to clean the bottle and the parts that touch your breast (not the tubing). Be sure not to get water into the tubing that connects your kit to the pump. You need to sterilize your kit once each day. You can do this by placing the kit in your dish-washer, boil the kit for 20 minutes, or use the steam sterilizer found in the breast pump rooms. Medela® has sanitizing bags for breastpump supplies. Follow the manufacturer's directions for use. If you boil your pump kit and you have "hard water," add 1–2 tablespoons of white vinegar to the pot of water. This will prevent mineral deposits from building up on your kit.

How do I store the milk?

You must store your milk in the human milk storage containers provided by the hospital. These are excellent for milk storage. Be sure to take some home with you. Follow these directions when storing milk:

- Get an ID sticker for your baby from your nurse. Write the time and date on the sticker and put it on the container of pumped milk.
- Store milk from each pumping separately. Never add freshly pumped milk to a container of milk that is already in your refrigerator or freezer.
- Immediately after pumping, put your milk either in the refrigerator or freezer.
- If your baby will take your milk within two days, refrigerate it. If not, put it in the back of your freezer (not in the door). You can keep frozen milk in a regular freezer for three months and in a deep freeze for six months.

How do I keep my breastmilk safe?

To make sure that your milk is given only to your baby, there will be several checks done on each

labeled container of your milk. These are checks of your baby's name and hospital number. The nurse caring for your baby with you or another staff member will do these checks. Checks are done when:

- You bring the milk onto the unit when your baby is admitted to the hospital
- The milk is prepared to be fed to your baby
- You take your milk home

It is your responsibility to work with the staff members to make sure the expressed milk you take home is yours. You share in the responsibility to make sure a staff member verifies your expressed milk before you take it home at any time. Your participation in breastmilk checks will protect you and your baby.

How do I get a breastpump for home use?

We recommend the hospital-quality Medela® or Ameda® electric breastpumps. They give the most stimulation with the best comfort. Some private insurance plans will pay for you to rent a breast-pump to use at home while your baby is in the hospital. Talk to your insurance company to get this approved. Medicaid will not cover the rental cost.

If you are on WIC, your may be able to get a free pump from them. Pumps you can buy at the store (hand, electric, or battery) most often do not give the best stimulation to the breasts. We strongly advise against using those until your baby is breastfeeding well.

How do I transport breastmilk?

Keep refrigerated milk cool and keep frozen milk frozen during transport. Once milk thaws, you need to use it within one day. Pack refrigerated milk in a cooler with ice. Do not pack frozen milk in ice. The ice will thaw the milk. Instead, put the frozen milk in a cooler. Fill the empty spaces between the containers of milk with a towel or Styrofoam beads. If you are traveling a long distance, put dry ice in the cooler to keep the milk from thawing.

Does stress affect milk supply?

You have a lot of stress in your life now. Stress can block the let-down reflex and reduce milk flow. Your milk supply can change during the day related to your baby's condition. If you have extreme stress, you may not be able to pump any milk at all even though milk is still in the breast. This is temporary. It is important to keep pumping regularly to keep a good milk supply.

Tips

- Milk production is based on supply and demand. The more the breasts are stimulated, the more milk you will produce. At first, you may get only a few drops of milk at each pumping. By the third or fourth day after birth, your milk will start to come in. It will become whiter and thinner. This is normal.
- It is much easier to keep up a good milk supply than it is to build up a low supply.
- Set up a pump station at home. You might use a pump, thermos of water or juice glass, a picture of your baby, a novel, and the TV remote.
- Turn off your phone and put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door. It can be very helpful to hand massage the breast before pumping. Take a shower or place a warm, wet washcloth on your breasts, close your eyes, and think of your baby. Naps do wonders!

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