



# London Health Sciences Centre

## Patient Information PUMPING GUIDELINES

**Pumping and hand expression are good ways to remove milk from your breasts. Even if you do not obtain milk, pumping still provides stimulation to make milk. Talk to your health care provider or someone skilled in helping with breastfeeding if you have any questions or concerns.**

### WHEN TO PUMP

#### **If you are breastfeeding regularly and want to pump:**

- When your baby breastfeeds from one breast, pump milk from the other breast.
- Pump between feedings.
- If you miss a feeding, pump milk from both breasts to help maintain your milk supply.

#### **If you are unable to breastfeed regularly or you are not fully feeding your baby at breast:**

- Pump as often as your baby would normally feed. Make sure milk is removed from your breasts at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Consider using a hospital grade electric breast pump with a double pump kit.
- Make sure to pump both day and night.

#### **If you have decided not to breastfeed and want to feed expressed breast milk:**

- Pump as often as your baby would normally feed. Make sure milk is removed from your breasts at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Consider using a hospital grade electric breast pump with a double pump kit.
- Make sure to pump both day and night.

### HOW TO PUMP

- Research shows that double pumping stimulates milk production more than single pumping and can obtain more milk.
- Hand expression and breast massage will help your milk flow and can increase the amount of milk you obtain with pumping.
- Apply a small amount of expressed breast milk to your nipples before you begin and after pumping, if desired.
- Begin with a suction setting that is comfortable and watch for your milk to begin to flow.
- Suction levels that feel comfortable may vary from person to person. Increase suction levels while maintaining comfort to find the best level for you. Pumping should not be painful.
- Avoid long periods of continuous suction.

## Single Pumping

- If your baby has not breastfed, alternate pumping between breasts two or three times at each pumping session. When the milk from the first breast stops flowing switch to the other breast. It may take 15 – 30 minutes to thoroughly remove milk and stimulate both breasts.
- If your baby has fed from one breast, you can pump milk from the other breast.
- If you are having questions or concerns, talk with someone skilled in helping with breastfeeding.

## Double Pumping

- If your baby is not feeding at breast, it is recommended to use a hospital grade electric breast pump. Talk to your health care provider about hospital grade electric breast pump rental information.
- Double pumping for 10 minutes, resting for 10 minutes, and then pumping once again for 10 minutes may be helpful in improving a low milk supply.
- If you are having questions or concerns, talk with someone skilled in helping with breastfeeding.

## Getting Started:

- Clean your hands before pumping
  - Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands with warm, soapy water if hands are dirty.
- Find a place where you will be comfortable when you pump and when possible, near your baby.
- Settle your baby before you begin pumping.
- You may wish to have a drink of water or juice while pumping.
- Allow adequate time for pumping and try to relax. Thinking about your baby, picturing yourself feeding your baby, or listening to music can help stimulate the flow of your milk.
- You may want to use a warm cloth on your breasts or shower before pumping to help your milk flow.
- Gently massage the breast moving from the chest wall toward the nipple before and during the pumping session.
- The amount of milk that you pump will vary with each pumping session. It is not uncommon for each breast to produce different amounts of milk.
- Remember it takes time to learn how to pump and to feel comfortable pumping.
- Using hand expression during your pumping session to help remove milk from your breasts.
- Pumping milk is not as effective at removing milk from the breast as a baby who is breastfeeding well. You cannot tell how much milk your baby drinks when breastfeeding by measuring the amount of milk that you obtain when pumping.
- Pumping times can vary and can take 10 – 30 minutes per session.
- Talk to your health care provider or someone skilled with helping with breastfeeding if you have any questions or concerns about pumping. They may suggest that you use a different breast pump, change the size of the pump flange, reduce the suction strength, or alter your technique.

See handout: ***Hand Expression***

Maximizing Milk Production with Hands on Pumping (Stanford University - Dr Jane Morton):  
<https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html>

<https://www.lactationcounselingservices.com/single-post/2019/07/02/hands-on-pumping>

## References

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Lawrence, R., & Lawrence, R. (2021). *Breastfeeding: A guide for the medical profession* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Elsevier Canada.

Marasco, L & West, D. (2019). *Making more milk: The breastfeeding Guide to increasing your milk production*, 2nd ed. McGraw Hill.

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