

## Expressing Your Breastmilk

Your breastmilk is the best milk for your baby. If you can't be with your baby at feeding time, you can collect your milk in advance by using hand expression or a breast pump. The first couple times, you may only get enough milk to cover the bottom of the container. Don't get discouraged. It may take a few days before you see an increase in the amount of milk you get. How often you express milk will depend upon your needs and the needs of your baby.

### Follow these steps before hand expression or using a pump:

- Choose a quiet, comfortable place.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Relax and think about your baby. Looking at a picture of your baby or listening to music may be helpful.
- Gently massage your breasts for a few minutes. Using your fingertips, make small circles from your chest out to your nipple, moving around your breast.
- Roll your nipple between your thumb and finger. This can help the milk to flow and make hand expression or pumping easier.

### Expressing your milk with a breast pump

Breastmilk can be collected by hand expression, hand pump, electric pump or battery-operated pump. If you are unsure what kind of pump is best for you, ask a breastfeeding specialist for help.

- Follow the directions that come with the pump.
- On an electric pump, set the suction control on the pump to the lowest setting.
- Center your nipple in the opening.
- It may take several minutes for milk to flow. Pump until the flow of milk slows to a drip.
- If you are pumping both breasts at the same time, rest for several minutes, then repeat once or twice. If you are pumping one breast at a time, you can switch from one breast to the other and don't need to wait.
- You can slowly increase the suction as long as you are comfortable.
- Wash the collection kit after each use in hot, soapy water.

## Hand expressing your milk

You should still learn to hand express even if you use a breast pump.

- You can practice hand expression in the shower or when your breasts feel extra full.
- Choose a clean container with a wide opening to collect your milk.
- Find the area on your breast where the dark meets the lighter part of your skin.
- Place your thumb on top and pointer finger underneath, press in towards your chest with your hand and then gently roll your fingers forward towards the nipple. Do not squeeze or pinch the nipple.
- Change the position of your thumb and fingers on the breast and repeat the press and rolling motion until all parts of the breast have been expressed and the flow of the milk slows down (5-10 minutes).
- Repeat this step on the opposite breast. Express from both breasts several times, until your breasts feel soft (20-30 minutes).



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