

# Pumping and Storage of Breastmilk for the Healthy Baby

## Reasons to Pump and Store Breastmilk

Breastfeeding mothers may need to pump or remove milk for many reasons:

- When mother and baby are separated for a long time
- When the mother is ill
- When the breast becomes over-full or engorged
- When nipples are flat or inverted and the baby will not latch
- When the mother must return to work or school and she wishes to continue to breastfeed

## When to remove milk from the breast

Most newborns need to nurse every 2 to 3 hours. If you or your baby cannot nurse every 2 to 3 hours, remove milk from your breast by pumping to prevent over-fullness and help your body make milk. Begin to pump as soon as your nursing pattern is interrupted. Do not wait until you are engorged or uncomfortable.

Colostrum, or the first milk your body makes, has antibodies that protect your baby from infection. You should begin to collect and save this milk within the first 24 hours after delivery if breast feeding is not occurring for any reason.

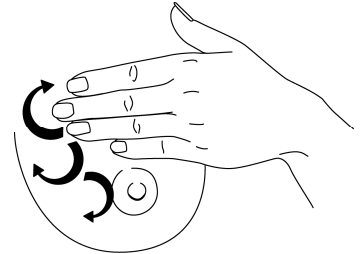
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## Preparing your breast for milk removal

Your breasts may feel very firm before milk removal. To help remove the milk from the breast, a breast massage can be helpful.

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Move your fingers on the breast from the back to the front with gentle circular motions. Use the pads of your fingers until the entire breast has been stroked. This will help the milk to be removed from the breast.
- Warm compresses may also be used on the breast for a few minutes before milk removal. Do not use hot compresses as this can make milk removal more difficult.



## Removing milk from the breast

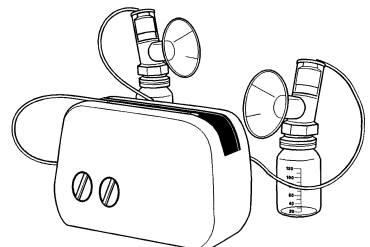
Breastmilk may be removed by hand expression or by manual or electric breast pumps. Pumping will get easier once your milk supply comes in.

### • Hand Expression

- ▶ Place your thumb and first 2 fingers around the areola and gently push back toward the chest.
- ▶ Roll your thumb and fingers forward to express the milk while adding some pressure to the breast. This helps the breast release the milk.
- ▶ Continue this motion, moving around each breast. You may need to repeat this a few times on each breast for the milk to be removed.

### • Manual or Electric Pump

- ▶ Use a pump of your choice if you do not want to hand express the milk. If you are returning to work or will be separated from your baby for a long time, a larger electric pump is most effective. Electric pumps are available for rent



from a variety of providers.

- ▶ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use of the pump. Call the OSU Breastfeeding Helpline at (624) 293-8910 if you need help with what type of pump will be best for you needs.

## **Storing Breastmilk**

- Breastmilk may be refrigerated up to 3 days, or frozen for 3 to 4 months in the coldest part of the freezer. In a chest type freezer, where temperature is colder and more stable, breastmilk can be kept frozen for 6 months.
- Most hospitals suggest that breastmilk be frozen in glass or hard plastic bottles. Leave some room in the bottle for the milk to expand when it freezes.
- If your baby is in the hospital, you will need to follow certain guidelines to store breastmilk to bring into the hospital for your baby. Ask the nurse for containers to collect and store your breastmilk. Plastic liners may not be used in the hospital.
- When you baby goes home, plastic liners may be used for full term infants. Be careful not to touch the inside of the liner or bottle so the milk will not get bacteria in it. Seal all containers immediately after the milk is collected.

## **Thawing Breastmilk**

- Thawed breastmilk should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours.
- Thaw breastmilk under hot tap water. Do not boil or microwave breastmilk. High temperatures destroy the antibodies that are important to keeping your baby healthy. When milk is thawed, shake the bottle gently to mix the milk.
- Do not refreeze unused milk. Throw away any breastmilk left in the bottle after a feeding.

## **Breastfeeding Support**

Babies and mothers benefit in many ways from breastfeeding. Do not get discouraged! Be patient while you are learning to express or pump milk. When you see your baby grow and thrive on your milk, you will know what a wonderful gift your breastmilk is to your baby.

If you need more help, call your nurse, a lactation consultant or your doctor. You can also call the OSU Breastfeeding Helpline at (614) 293-8910.

- ❖ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**