



Bringing In And Maintaining Your Milk Supply When Your Baby Is Unable To Nurse

If your infant is unable to nurse regularly and/or vigorously, you will need to pump your breasts frequently in order to maintain full milk production. Milk production and release are affected by your emotional state, your physical condition, and your pumping routines. The following suggestions should help stimulate your milk supply and develop your milk-ejection reflex (let-down) so pumping can be more efficient. As you become more comfortable with pumping, you will discover which techniques are more effective for you.

It is best to rent a piston electric breast pump. Double pumping is more time efficient and may help you produce more milk, but single pumping is also acceptable. Manual pumps and small hand held battery or electric pumps are less effective and you will not be able to develop and maintain a sufficient milk supply. When double pumping, pump for about 10 minutes total. For single pumping, alternate breasts, pumping for about 7 minutes each, then 5 minutes, then 3 minutes. If your infant is not nursing at breast, you will need to pump frequently; every 2-3 hours during the day, and **at least** once through the night.

Triggering your milk-ejection reflex: Sit in a comfortable position and relax your entire body. Thinking about your baby and playing soft background music can also help. If milk flow has not started after 5 minutes of pumping, stop expressing. Concentrate on relaxing, try breast massage (see below), then resume pumping.

Gentle massage can help start your milk flow. Start at the chest wall and massage with a circular motion about the size of quarter, gradually moving toward the nipple. Massaging your breasts midway through a pumping session may help you obtain more milk. Try taking a warm bath or shower before pumping. You can also use warm compresses on your breasts throughout the pumping session.

Drink enough fluids to satisfy your thirst. Having a glass of water each time you pump is a good rule of thumb. Do not over drink. Too much fluid can suppress your milk supply. The amount of milk you obtain may vary from one pumping session to another, but your 24 hour total of expressed milk should be fairly consistent (after the 1st week). To maintain a good milk supply, be sure you are pumping **at least** 7-8 times each day.

Be patient with yourself; you will need time and practice to condition your milk-ejection reflex to respond to pumping. Remember, it is important to begin direct breastfeeding as early and as often as your baby's condition permits. If your baby is in the hospital, offering your breast whenever possible during your hospital visits will familiarize your baby with breastfeeding.

