

Stimulation of Breast Milk Supply



Why is early stimulation of breast milk/ expression favourable?

During the first few hours after delivery, the levels of lactation hormones oxytocin and prolactin are extraordinarily high. By initiating the stimulation of breast milk production as early as possible after birth, preferably within the first one or two hours, the vast hormone secretion can be utilized. This may result in earlier milk expression and greater volumes of milk. If an early start is not feasible, it is however never too late to begin stimulation. The two terms stimulation and expression are both used, since usually no or only a few drops of milk will be expressed during the first few sessions. This is fully normal, and continuous stimulation/expression will enable and increase milk production within a few days.

Each drop of milk is valuable - give it to your child as soon as possible

Even a small amount of colostrum activates and strengthens your child's immune system and may decrease the risk of infections.

Most children are eligible to receive milk sensations as soon as possible after birth, preferably within the first few hours after partus, and then continuously about eight times per day.

How to do

The procedure may preferably be performed by the parent with support and tuition by hospital staff. When one or a few drops of colostrum has been expressed, an amount of 0,1 ml can be inserted into one or two 1 ml syringes. Prepare the child by holding him/her tightly. Dip the pacifier in colostrum and gently touch the child's lips. Wait for response - the child may start licking and show interest. Put the syringe carefully behind the cheek. Give slowly 0,1 ml of colostrum. If there is milk left, the procedure may be repeated behind the other cheek.

When and how?

Continue breast milk stimulation/expression about 8 times per day in order to stimulate and maintain lactation. We also encourage stimulation/expression during the night, at least once, in order to keep high levels of the milk production hormone prolactin further.

Initially, only a few drops of colostrum will be expressed, but continuously repeated stimulation/expression will result in a faster increase in milk production volumes.

The daily frequency of expression sessions are more important than the duration of each session. If possible, express close by your child, skin-to-skin, or at least near the baby, since this may increase the oxytocin release. The oxytocin hormone affects the let-down reflex, which causes the breasts to push out the milk.

If expressing near your child is not possible, the let-down reflex may be facilitated by smelling an item with the scent of the child, such as a binky.

Optimal conditions include opportunities for rest, drinking and eating, as well as adequate pain relief.

What methods can be used - hand expression or breast pump?

The first time/times it is usually easier to stimulate/express by hand, which also can make it easier to express more colostrum. Sometimes after a cesarian delivery, or when experiencing genital pain after delivery, it may be hard to find a comfortable position using a breast pump. Many women choose to use a pump later on, as it is often preceived useful when expressing for a longer period of time.

Hand hygiene

Adequate hand hygiene before and after stimulation/expression is important regardless of expression method. Wash hands using soap and water.

Hand expression

1. Stay close to your child if possible, preferably skin-to-skin.
2. Stroke your breast gently from your ribs towards the nipple a few minutes before stimulation/expression.
3. Form your fingers like a "C", right beside the outer edges of the areola. Bring the "C"-grip backwards towards the ribs, then push the fingers together and bring them forward towards the nipple.
4. Continuously repeat the third step - rhythmically, with a relaxed hand.

Move your fingers around the areola in order to stimulate the entire breast. Stimulate about 5 minutes per breast and repeat this moment several times. Change breast when the milk expression ends. It may take several minutes before the milk starts to express, which can be perceived as lengthy. Be patient and keep on stimulating.

Please watch the film "how to hand express breast milk" on the website of Health Care Guide 1177:

<https://www.1177.se/Stockholm/Tema/Barn-och-foraldrar/Mat-somn-och-praktiska-rad/Amning-och-modersmjolksersattning/Mjolka-och-pumpa-ur-brostmjolk/?ar=True#section-1>

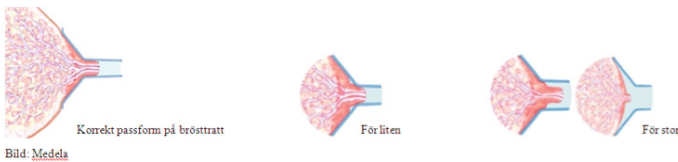


Photographer: Sandra Hegstrand

Expressing milk with an electrical breast pump

You may choose to double-pump both breasts at the same time or to pump only one breast at a time. Double-pumping is time saving and more hormones are released. This may stimulate increased milk volumes. Try it out and choose the method you prefer best.

1. Choose a funnel that fits onto your breast, so that the nipple can move back and forward in the middle of the funnel without chafing towards the inside.



2. Moisten the edges of the funnel with water to create a tighter grip.

3. Start pumping and increase the vacuum pressure until the pressure is forceful, then lower the pressure until it is perceived comfortable. Pumping should not be painful!

4. There are two programmes in the ward breast pumps. One is called *Initiate* and the other *Maintain*. Depending on which program is used, milk expression is achieved in the following ways:

Initiate

When the initiate programme is used, double-pumping is recommended. The breast pump is started by pushing the start button on the left side, then press the drop button immediately. The programme starts and a drop is shown in the display. Adjust the vacuum pressure according to your preferences.

The breast pump shuts down automatically after fifteen minutes. If 20 ml of milk has been expressed during three consecutive sessions, or if five days have passed, the maintain-programme should be used instead.

Maintain

Start the pump by pressing the start button to the left. The pump starts, showing three drops in the display. Adjust the vacuum pressure according to your preferences. The pump works for two minutes in the "simulation phase" and will then switch to the "expression phase". If the expression starts within two minutes, it is possible to manually switch between the two phases by pressing the right "drop" button. Before milk production is fully established, 5-15 minutes of pumping time on each breast is usually enough. When the production is established, expression can be maintained as long as milk is still running, about 15-(30) minutes per breast, or according to your own preferences.

Hygiene after pumping

The pump pieces are changed once a day during the hospital stay. The pieces should then be disassembled, and rinsed three times. At first with cold water, then with hot water and then with cold water once again.

The pieces should be put to air dry and should be stored on a clean surface in your room. At home, the pump pieces are used for a longer period of time and should be boiled up to once a day in addition to other cleaning.

**If you have any questions
- do not hesitate to ask our staff.**

