

# Pumping Breastmilk

Pump completely and often enough to keep your breasts from becoming full, and to adequately remove milk from your breasts.

**Goal:** At least 8 to 12 times every 24 hours

If you are starting to pump while in the hospital, pump on initiate mode until your breasts feel like they are getting heavier or fuller.

- Initiate mode runs for 15 minutes and then turns itself off.
- Do not turn up the suction on this mode.
- This mode stimulates your breasts to prepare for milk production. It will not remove milk if milk is not yet there.
- This mode should not be used beyond the first 3 days after delivery.
- This mode should be stopped by the time you leave the hospital.

**Switch to pumping on maintain mode once:**

- Your breasts become heavier or feel more full.
- You start to collect colostrum in your pump bottle.
- Initiate mode is uncomfortable.
- You have been discharged from the hospital.
- It has been 72 hours since the birth of your baby.

**Tips for Successful Pumping:**

- Before pumping, try a brief, gentle breast massage followed by hand expression to begin milk flow.
- Start your pump on the lowest setting. Wait until you have letdown, or for two minutes if you don't experience letdown, then adjust your pump to the highest setting that does not cause pain.
- On maintain mode, or with pump you are using at home, pump for two minutes after your steady flow or dripping stops, usually 10 to 30 minutes.
  - Your milk starts to flow during the extra two minutes, keep pumping, up to 30 minutes.
- Add hands-on pumping (gentle breast massage and pushing milk toward nipple) to increase milk removal if needed. A hands-free pumping bra may be helpful.
- Pump both breasts at the same time if possible, and use an electric breast pump.
  - If for some reason, you need to pump only one breast at a time, alternate breasts every few minutes to help empty them at the same rate. This way, one breast does not continue to fill as you pump the other.
- If you are pumping and breastfeeding, pump soon after each breastfeeding session. While you may not have milk left in your breasts after your baby breastfeeds, this process signals your breast to make more milk.

**Anytime you need to increase your milk supply, increase the number of pumping sessions and remove as much milk as possible at each session.**

# Pumping Breastmilk (cont.)

## **Use correct size flanges.**

- The correct size usually changes throughout your lactation progression.
- Use the smallest size possible, avoiding any rubbing on your nipple when the flange is centered.
  - Your areola can touch the flange, but your nipple should not.
- Sometimes one breast needs one size flange and the other breast needs a different size.
- Hold flanges tight enough to your breasts to create suction, but not so tight that they indent the breasts and block the flow of milk.
  - Be careful of this, especially if you are using a hands-free pumping bra.

## **If your pump does not appear to be pumping well enough:**

- Ensure all connections are tight.
- Ensure the membrane is flat against the valve and is not torn.
- Try switching the flanges to the opposite breasts.
- Have your pump's vacuum pressure checked by bringing it to the New Beginnings Boutique at Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women & Newborns.
- Consider renting a pump from the New Beginnings Boutique.

## **How to clean your pump parts in the hospital:**

- Wash pump parts as soon as possible after pumping.
- Wash your pump parts in a basin or under running water, not directly in the sink.
- Use a soapy cloth towelette to create friction while washing pump parts.
- Shake to remove excess water or dry with clean paper towel.
- Place on clean, dry towel as each piece is washed and rinsed.
- Bring clean pump parts out of the bathroom to air dry.

## **How to clean your pump parts at home:**

- Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Sanitize daily using one of the following options:
  - Boiling in water.
  - Using microwave steam bags.
  - Place on the top rack of the dishwasher that has a sanitize mode. You may need an appropriate cage/ container for loose pieces.