



Once your milk has “come in” you may find it easier to express breastmilk with a breast pump, either manual or electric. It is important to follow the manufacturer’s directions regarding use, cleaning and sterilisation.

How to use a hand pump

- Stimulate the nipple by hand and start the milk flow by hand expressing.
- Place the pump shield centrally over your nipple and hold it firmly against your breast, without digging in.
- Use the pump gently but quickly at first – this helps with the letdown reflex and mimics what your baby does when they first start a breastfeed.
- Once the milk is flowing use a slower speed but stronger suction.
- There should be no pain or discomfort.

How to use an electric pump

1. Stimulate the nipple by hand and start the milk flow by hand expressing.
2. Place the pump shield centrally over your nipple and hold it firmly against your breast, without digging in.
3. Use at high speed but low suction at first (some pumps have an automatic speed setting).
4. Once the milk is flowing, slow the speed back to medium and increase the suction to a comfortable level for you and helps the milk flow well.
5. Your nipple should move freely in the pump shield, with little or none of your areola being pulled into the pump shield.
6. Express for 10–20 mins total or until the flow is reduced to drops.

- If you are unsure about the breast fit, seek advice from a breastfeeding specialist.
- There should be no pain or discomfort.
- Double pumping (expressing both breasts at once) will decrease the time needed to express. It is recommended for longer term expressing and for mothers of twins or other multiples.

Expressing with a double electric pump kit

1. Follow steps 1–5 for the single pump.
2. When you are ready, place the second pump shield over your other nipple.
3. Express for 10–15 minutes total or until the flow is reduced to drops.
4. Some mothers find that expressing both breasts by hand for a minute or so after using the pump helps to get a few extra mls and help maintain their milk supply.
5. At any time you can use the pump as a single pump if you prefer.

Purchasing a breast pump

There are various things you should consider before purchasing a breast pump, such as:

- if feeding is going well you may not need to purchase a pump
- hand or manual pumps are intended for occasional use 2–3 times a day
- some hand pumps can be used with electric breast pumps
- electric pumps are for more frequent use e.g. more than 3 times a day or for a long period of time
- if you have a premature baby it is best to use a electric breast pump.

The choice of pump for you is determined by how often you will use it. It is best to seek expert breastfeeding advice before hiring or purchasing any pump equipment.

Breast pumps can be hired or purchased from:

- Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
Tel: 98055501 (Mon–Fri. 9–5, Sat 11–3)
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
At ABA, breast pumps are hired from a trained breastfeeding counsellor who can help you with any questions about using the pump, expressing and storing your breastmilk.
- Equipment Distribution Centre
The Royal Children’s Hospital
Tel: (03) 9345 5325
or visit www.rch.org.au/edc.
- Many pharmacies also hire and sell breast pumps

Cleaning the breast pump equipment

- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Dismantle all pieces of the breast pump kit after use.
- Rinse with cold water all parts that come in contact with breast milk.
- Wash in warm water and dishwashing detergent.
- Rinse thoroughly under warm running water.
- Allow to air dry while draining on clean paper towel before storing in a clean closed container or plastic bag.
- It is recommended that the equipment is sterilised daily if your baby is in a Special Care Nursery.
- The equipment can be sterilised daily by using a process such as boiling (see below), Milton solution (follow manufacturer’s directions) or a home steam steriliser (follow manufacturer’s directions).

Boiling method of disinfection

- Wash hands thoroughly
- Thoroughly clean all parts as above
- Completely immerse all parts of the breast pump kit in water, bring to the boil and continue to boil rapidly (completely submerged) for five minutes uninterrupted
- Remove the items without touching the inside of the containers. Long handled tongs, which have been sterilised along with the breast pump kit, may be useful
- Allow to air dry while draining on clean paper towel before storing in a clean closed container or plastic bag.

Guidelines for storage of breastmilk at home

Breastmilk status	Room temperature (26°C or lower)	Refrigerator (4°C or lower)	Freezer
Freshly expressed into container	6–8 hours If refrigerator is available store milk there	3–5 days Store at back where it is coldest	2 weeks in freezer compartment inside refrigerator 3 months in freezer section of refrigerator with separate door 6–12 months in deep freeze (-18°C or lower)
Previously frozen thawed in refrigerator but not warmed	4 hours or less – that is, the next feeding	24 hours	Do not refreeze
Thawed outside refrigerator in warm water	For completion of feeding	4 hours or until next feeding	Do not refreeze
Infant has begun feeding	Only for completion of feeding	Discard	Discard

See also: *Breastfeeding: Expressing breast milk* fact sheet

Where to get more information

Your local Maternal & Child Health Nurse

Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)

Tel: 13 22 29

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Tel: 1800 686 268 – Breastfeeding Helpline

Web: www.breastfeeding.asn.au

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