

NICU PUMPING GUIDE

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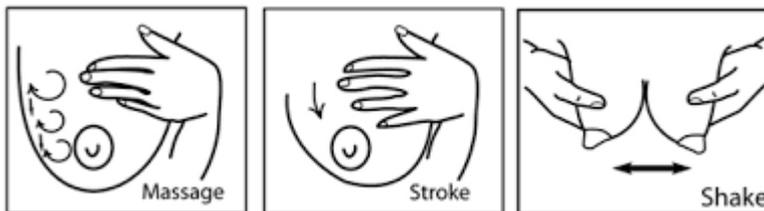
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In case of any mother-baby separation after birth, direct breastfeeding may not be possible. Moms who need to express their milk exclusively or in addition to breastfeeding are often concerned about their milk production.

What is Hands-on Pumping?

Hands-on pumping is a milk expression technique in which moms use their hands to assist in milk removal. Combining breast massage and hand expression with pumping can help moms remove more milk and drain the breast more fully. Put simply, hands-on pumping helps maximize the amount of milk removed now and maintain milk production in the future. Method:

- **Begin** milk expression immediately after birth and then every 3 hours.
- Colostrum is best collected by hand expression, in a syringe, spoon or cup.
- Apply **moist heat** to both breasts (hot wet towel or hot pack). Expressing after taking a hot shower also helps.
- **Massage** your breasts to help stimulate the milk ejection reflex. Use your fingers held flat against your breast and gently massage in a circular motion with firm pressure from the point where the breast meets the chest in a downward direction towards the nipple. Gently stroke with your finger tips from outer side of the breast towards the nipple. Lean forwards and shake.



- **Double pump** with an electric hospital grade pump, using your own new kit. Assure your breast shields fit well. Find a level of suction that is comfortable and effective for you. Consider using a “hands free” pumping bra, bustier, or sports bra with holes cut for the breast shields so that you can pump without

having to hold them in place. This frees your hands so you can massage and compress your breasts while pumping.

- **Compress** your breasts as much as you can **while pumping**. Continue until milk flow slows to a trickle. When the sprays of milk slow to dribbles, **stop pumping and repeat massage**.



- Massage your breasts again, concentrating on areas that feel full.



- **Single pump or hand express** to complete your pumping session. Alternate breasts (right to left to right). Give each breast a short rest before expressing it again. Feel for areas of firmness and gently massage them out. Pay close attention to the outside of the breasts, as this will be the areas least likely to be well drained from pumping alone. Let the sprays of milk be your guide as to where your breast needs compression and massage. Finish by either hand expressing your milk into the pump's nipple tunnel or single pumping, whichever yields the most milk.
- Experiment and develop your own technique. With practice, you will find what works best for you! This entire routine can take about 30 minutes.

Hands-on pumping can be used by any mother who wants to improve her pumping milk yield or boost her milk production. **Drained breasts make milk faster**, and hands-on pumping helps drains your breasts more fully with each pumping.

Even if your baby requires less milk at the moment, it is important to **pump at least every 3 hours** to ensure a long-term good supply. Excess milk can be stored for later use, it's the stimulation of frequent emptying that's important.

Some additional ways to help maximize and maintain milk production:

- Spend as much time as possible holding your baby and/or in skin to skin contact with your baby(**kangaroo care**). Close contact with your baby encourages the “flow” of the breastfeeding hormones prolactin and oxytocin.
- Keep a flexible schedule for removing milk. Aim to breastfeed or express your milk **at least 8 times in 24 hours**.
- Music has been associated with increasing the amount of milk expressed in NICU settings.
- Consider warming your breastshields before pumping. One study found that using warm breastshields along with maximum comfortable vacuum decreased the time needed to remove 80 percent of the milk volume.
- If you have difficulty initiating letdown, **Reverse Pressure Softening** can help by stimulating the nerves that lie under the **areola**. These nerves control the release of the hormone oxytocin, which is responsible for milk release. Most moms can initiate letdown with RPS in 1-2 minutes. It is especially helpful when areolar engorgement makes latching or pumping difficult.



- Choose a breastpump that is right for your pumping needs. Talk to an IBCLC to get personalized assistance finding a pump that works for you.

(Hands-on pumping was developed by Dr. Jane Morton and studied at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital and Stanford University School of Medicine)