

Top Tips for Pumping Breast Milk

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Worried or just wondering about how pumping works? Never fear: reassurance and answers are here!

It seems like a conundrum, doesn't it? How can you pump when you're nursing... and how can you nurse when you're pumping?

Fortunately, the whole "how can I have enough to both pump and nurse?" issue really isn't an issue. It is possible to do both.

Pump Before Nursing

Keep in mind that nursing operates on a supply-and-demand principle: the more you nurse (or pump), the more milk your body will make. Naturally, you'll need to keep up your end, by making sure you're hydrated (i.e., drinking "to thirst" which means to be conscious of how much fluid you're taking in, but avoid drinking pints, quarts, and gallons, just because you think you've got to pump in those fluids). You'll also need to make sure that you're eating well and getting as much rest as possible. Believe me when I say that when the baby rests, that's the time for you to rest, too. You'll be refreshed and much better able to cope with the demands life makes of you than if you run yourself ragged by trying to do too much when what you really need is to take a break.

Pump While Nursing

While you nurse your baby, the milk will be let down in both your breasts at the same time. If you're dextrous, you can hold baby to nurse and the horn to pump at the same time. (If you're a new mom or about to be a new mom, relax. You'll be surprised to learn all that you'll be able to do once you've become comfortable nursing.)

Pump as Often as Your Baby Nurses

If you can pump, say, once every three hours, you'll find the results are much better than pumping for a longer time only once or twice a day. Short, frequent sessions will boost your supply.

Pump in the Morning - Again

If you can add an extra session in the morning, when you have the most milk, it will help you build your supply.

Pump Both Breasts at the Same Time

"Double-pumping" generally produces more milk than pumping one breast at a time. Electric pumps are generally easier and more efficient; however, some women achieve great results doubling up and using two manual pumps.

Pump After Showering or Bathing

The warm, soothing effects of a shower or bath can help to get your milk flowing.

Pump Gently

Pumping is definitely not a one-size-fits-all proposition. What works for your friends may not work for you. Start with your pump at the lowest setting. If you achieve results, great! If you don't, slightly increase the suction. The goal is to use the lowest setting that achieves results. Cranking the suction up to the highest setting can be counter-productive, causing sore nipples. If you're sore or the suction is too intense, you'll become uptight and will find it hard or impossible to pump any milk. To avoid creating this kind of vicious circle, relax, have a drink of water and pump gently.

Prime Your Pump

You've heard tales about nursing moms leaking if they hear a crying baby? Well, you can trigger your own letdown if you'll be pumping while your baby isn't with you. Carry a picture of your baby, a piece of clothing that has her scent, or even a small recorder so you can listen to the little sounds she makes. Relaxing and connecting with your baby by sight, smell, or sound are powerful triggers.

You can certainly have enough milk for your baby and your pump. The keys are hydration, nutrition, rest and relaxation. Pumping is a learned skill, so be kind to yourself while you're learning, and you'll soon see great results.

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, [Let Me Say This About That](#) . She pumped for a combined total of about 5 years, including after the premature birth of her older son, and after returning to work despite having to pump perched on a stepstool in a tiny supply closet right next to her office's cube farm.

<http://www.typeamom.net/top-tips-for-pumping-breast-milk.html>