

Expressing Breast Milk

Helping to maintain milk supply



Options You Can Try

Milk can be removed through a breast pump or by hand. You can help your milk to start flowing by having a picture of your baby close by.

If you must be away from your baby, it will be important to remove milk during the times your baby normally would feed to make sure you will continue to make enough milk for him or her.

Milk can be removed through a breast pump or by hand. When pumping or hand expressing milk, you can help your milk to start flowing by having a picture of your baby, a baby blanket, or other piece of your baby's clothing that has your baby's scent on it close by.

You also can apply a warm, but not hot, moist compress to the breast, gently massage the breasts, or sit quietly and think of a relaxing setting.

It is best to wash your hands before expressing your breast milk and to make sure the area where you are expressing is also clean.

After each expression, you can refrigerate your milk, place it in a cooler or insulated cooler pack, or freeze it in small (2 to 3 ounce) batches.

You can keep germs from getting into the milk by washing any pumping equipment with soap and water and letting it air dry.

Hospital-grade electric pumps can be rented from a lactation consultant a local hospital or from a breastfeeding organization. Also visit the [ZIPmilk](#) page on the North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition website for access to more resources in your area.

These pumps are for establishing milk supply or for special situations in which the mother needs a higher-powered pump.

See chart on reverse.



www.ncbfc.org

Ways To Express Your Milk

Type	How it Works	What's Involved	Average Cost
Hand Expression	You use your hand to massage and compress your breast to remove milk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires practice, skill and coordination. ▪ Gets easier with practice; can be as fast as pumping. ▪ Good if you are seldom away from baby or need an option that is always with you. 	Free, unless you need help from a breastfeeding professional who charges for services.
Manual Pump	You use your hand and wrist to operate a hand-held device to pump the milk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires practice, skill and coordination. ▪ Useful for occasional pumping if you are away from your baby once in a while. ▪ May put you at higher risk of breast infection. 	\$30 to \$50
Automatic, Electric Breast Pump	Runs on battery or plugs into an electrical outlet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easy to use. ▪ Can pump one breast at a time or both breasts at the same time. ▪ Double pumping may collect more milk in less time, so they are helpful if you are going back to work or school full-time. ▪ Need places to clean and store the equipment between uses. 	\$150 to \$250+