

Breastfeeding's Best Kept Secret: Hand Expression

With hand expression you can:

- Increase the amount of colostrum your baby receives and stimulate the transition to mature milk.
- Relieve engorgement for comfort or to help your baby latch on more easily.
- Stimulate milk production to increase your milk supply.
- Ease the pain if your nipples are too sore to latch or pump.
- Express your milk anytime and anywhere as it is convenient and free.

WIC can help you learn how to hand express your milk!

Before starting:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Use a clean container to collect milk. A bowl may make the milk collection easier.
- Find a place to relax and get comfortable.

To hand express your milk:

- 1. Massage your breasts:** Use small, circle-like motions from your chest to your nipple to help get your milk flowing.
- 2. Position your hand:** Place your thumb and your fingers about 1-2 inches behind your nipple, cupped in a "C" shape around your nipple.
- 3. Express your milk:** Gently **press** your fingers and thumb towards your chest. Then, **compress** by gently pressing your breast between your fingers and thumb, moving them towards your areola without squeezing or pulling your nipple. **Release** without moving your hand from your breast.
- 4. Press, compress, and release:** Continue the motion, rotating your hand to different areas around your breast until the milk flow stops. Then, switch to the other breast.



Hand expression shouldn't hurt!
Relax, be patient, and keep practicing!



How to Hand Express?

med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html

Maximize Milk Production with Hands on Pumping

Hands-on pumping is a technique that combines pumping with breast massage to get more milk flowing.

Hands on pumping can help you:

- Increase your milk supply to feed your baby.
- Maximize milk expression at every session.
- Make your pumping sessions quicker.



WIC offers pumping resources and support, ask your WIC staff!

To practice hands-on pumping:

- 1. Use a double electric breast pump.** It is helpful to wear a pumping bra to hold the flanges so that your hands are free for massaging your breasts.
- 2. Start your breast pump while gently massaging both breasts in a spiral pattern from the outer margins toward the nipples.** Use light touch to help you relax and to help stimulate your let down.
- 3. Once the milk is flowing, adjust the suction of your pump to the highest level that is comfortable for you.** Your nipple should be snug and gliding during the suction cycle and you should experience no pain while pumping. Using the correct pump flange size will help you remove more milk. Ask WIC staff for sizing help.
- 4. Alternate the massage to each breast,** paying special attention to the areas where you feel lumps until the flow of milk lessens, usually 5 to 7 minutes.



The amount of milk you pump does not tell you how much your baby is taking from the breasts.



More hand expressing and pumping tips

lila.org/breastfeeding-info/hand-expressing/

Maximizing Milk Production with Hands-On Pumping: assets.ctfassets.net/4yx69hifndy8/6v8V1eWxMqwkWkGltEtixe/eff85e5c62cde2ab6c595ad392577079/7498.pdf

The Smush™ Method: How to Do Hands-On Pumping — Milkology®: milkology.org/content/hands-on-pumping



Find more breastfeeding resources at:

WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov

cdc.gov/breastfeeding

Breast Milk Expression & Storage



Women, Infants & Children
SOUTH CAROLINA

dph.sc.gov/wic



SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

While feeding your baby from your breast is best, pumping and hand expressing milk can be helpful at times. Whether you're expressing milk to give your baby when you're away or for solving breastfeeding challenges, we have tips and tricks to help!

naturalNutrition

Safely Storing Breast Milk

- Use only clean breast milk storage bags, glass, or plastic food-grade containers (BPA free) to collect and store your milk and label them with the date and time it was expressed or pumped.
- Cool your freshly collected milk first before mixing with previously chilled or frozen milk.
- Keep your milk in the refrigerator if you plan to use it within 4 days.
- **When freezing breast milk:**
 - Store milk in small amounts 2-4 oz to prevent wasting.
 - Leave about 1 inch of space at the top of the container as milk expands when it freezes.
 - Store in the back of the freezer instead of the door to protect milk from temperature changes.
- **When using frozen breast milk:**
 - Thaw the breast milk container in the refrigerator overnight, in a bowl of warm water, or hold the container under warm running water. Never use a microwave or stove to thaw or warm breast milk.
 - Use thawed milk within 24 hours. Do not refreeze. Leftover milk from a feeding must be thrown out.
 - Breast milk may naturally separate during storage. **That's okay, it's not spoiled.** Gently swirl the milk.

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines*

	Countertop 77°F (25°C) or colder (room temperature)	Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Freezer 0°F (-18°C) or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Up to 4 Hours	Up to 4 Days	Within 6 months is best Up to 12 months is acceptable
Thawed, Previously Frozen	1-2 Hours	Up to 1 Day	NEVER refreeze breast milk after it has been thawed
Leftover from a Feeding (Baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding		

* These guidelines are for healthy full-term babies and may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider. Guidelines are for home use only and not for hospital use.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Storing Milk Collection Items

- Clean pump parts and containers after every use with hot soapy water, rinse well, and allow to air-dry.
- Sanitize your items once per day by using one of the following:
 - **Boiling:** covered in hot water for 10 minutes, remove with clean tongs.
 - **Dishwasher:** place items in dishwasher with heat drying or sanitizing setting.
 - **Steam:** in microwave sterilizer or steam bags following manufacturer's directions.
- Store. Allow to air-dry thoroughly before storing in a clean, protected area to prevent contamination during storage.



For additional milk storage and breastfeeding resources, visit [cdc.gov/breastfeeding](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding)

Selecting a Breast Pump & Common Types

Check with your health insurance company to learn more about the free breast pump that they provide. If needed, ask WIC staff for help assembling and using your breast pump. The WIC program also offers additional pumping resources for qualifying participants.

Double Electric Pumps



Double Electric Loaner Pumps

Best for mothers of ill or premature babies who do not have the strength to nurse at the breast or mothers who are exclusively pumping.



Double Electric Personal Use Pumps

Best for mothers that pump often, at work, school, or home.

Benefits

- Extracts milk from both breasts at the same time, making the pumping session shorter in time.
- Increases the amount of breast milk expressed.
- Efficient for moms that are separated from their infant > 20 hours per week.

Single Electric Pumps



Small Electric Pump

Best for mothers that need to occasionally pump.

- Extract milk from one breast at a time.
- One hand is free to practice hands-on pumping.
- Portable, easy to assemble and clean.
- Efficient for moms that are separated from their infant < 20 hours per week.

Manual Pumps



Manual Pumps

Best for occasional use or when a power source is not available.

- Compact and portable, no power source needed.
- Quickly relieves discomfort from very full breasts.
- Few parts so easy to assemble and clean.



Milk Collector Pump

Best for collecting milk from the other breast while feeding your baby.

- Simple, convenient, and quiet.
- Affordable.



Are you using the right flange size?

If your nipples are sore during or between pumping sessions, talk to your breastfeeding peer counselor about a new flange size. **Pro Tip:** Lubricate flange with water or breast milk for better suction!



Tension or anxiety can prevent your milk from flowing well. Listening to relaxing music has been shown to increase the amount of breast milk expressed.