

Lara's Top Dozen ePping Tips:

1) A good quality hospital-grade double electric pump. Some mums EP with a PIS or Purely Yours, but many will be more comfortable and/or get a better milk yield with a hospital-grade pump. If you're having trouble with supply using a retail pump, see if you can get a rental for a few weeks to test this out.

2) A hands free bra.

This is essential in my opinion, so that you can double pump while tending to your baby or getting work done. Extra length tubing will let you move around a little, feed the baby a bottle, change a nappy while you're pumping. Throw a big shirt over your set-up and stay at your desk (or aeroplane seat, or wherever) - no one will see anything they shouldn't.

Which brings me to

3) Your pump is the way you feed your baby.

You can pump anywhere you could breastfeed. Don't let yourself feel tied to the house or the desk - get a portable pump too (PIS with battery/car adapter, Isis, Harmony) and pump wherever you happen to be when it's pumping time. Don't be shy - if you lock yourself in a closet every time you pump, you'll feel isolated from the world. It doesn't take long to learn to stick an Isis or Harmony up your shirt modestly. Floppy shirts help; use a nursing canopy or muslin if you like.

4) If you can manage longer pump sessions (the hands free bra helps), do it

- extra let-downs mean more milk, and more lovely fatty hindmilk.

5) Stop pumping after ten or fifteen minutes, and massage-stroke-shake your breasts. Compress and massage your breasts while you're pumping.

Power pump - go back to the pump several times over the course of an hour or two, for five or ten minute sessions at a time.

6) Extra pump parts,

so you're not forever rinsing and washing. You don't need to sterilise the parts unless you have an immunosuppressed or special-needs baby; just rinse immediately after use with hot water and air dry. Wash in hot soapy water or a dishwasher once a day, being sure to get all the milk out from the yellow & white valve & flap. Forget antibacterial wipes and all that other gubbins people will try to sell you. You don't need antibacterial chemicals to have a healthy baby; they'll just create

more resistant "superbugs" in the environment, and they might eliminate the "good bacteria" (probiotic bacteria) that the baby needs.

7) Rest, relax, calories and fluids

Guilt and stress are big-time supply busters. Get counselling if you need it, antidepressants if you need them. Talk to your midwife, counsellor, LC, doctor, partner, friends. There is a lot of discussion about lactogenic foods, including oatmeal, barley, fenugreek and lots of others - check out kellymom.com and the yahoo group MOBI for more information.

8) The right size flanges

for you may make an enormous difference to your comfort. Experiment with the different sizes available to find out what works best. Don't muck about trying to work out how many millimetres across your nipples are; these guides are dodgy at best. Just try it, and use what works and is comfortable.

9) Lube the flanges

with olive oil - much, much better than horn burn.

10) Don't dump that milk!

If any health care professional ever suggests you pump and dump, research the medication/procedure independently first (kellymom.com, MOBI, and misc.kids.breastfeeding are good places to start). Nine times out of ten, the doctor is wrong. If you're not sure, label the milk clearly, freeze it, and find out. Don't dump first and ask questions later.

11) Have a working backup plan, and learn to hand express!

What do you plan to do if there's a blackout? If your pump breaks? If all your pump parts get broken or melted? If your car breaks down, if you're in the ER unexpectedly, some other emergency arises? Overnighting new gear is all very well, but it won't be here soon enough for your next session. So, be sure to have a battery pack and/or a manual pump that you know works for you, and learn to hand express effectively.

12) Above all, love and enjoy your baby.

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Suggestions on Using an Electric Breast Pump

This article is designed to help you use an electric breast pump effectively so you can provide your breastmilk for your baby. An electric breast pump attempts to copy the sucking action of a baby; though your baby is more efficient at emptying the breast. Thus, expressing breastmilk may take a little longer than actually breastfeeding your baby.

There are many reasons why mothers express breastmilk for their babies. Some particular instances may be: your baby is premature or unable to suck; your baby may be ill in hospital and you cannot be there for every feed; you may need to be hospitalised and you cannot take your baby with you; or you may work or study outside the home while breastfeeding your baby. You can contact a trained Australian Breastfeeding Association counsellor who can provide information and support in your particular situation.

Breastmilk is the perfect irreplaceable gift a mother can give to her baby. It is the best start a baby can have in life. Breastfeeding protects your baby from illness and infection, and provides the normal food for your growing baby. Those not breastfed have increased risks of allergy and SIDS.

How often should you express?

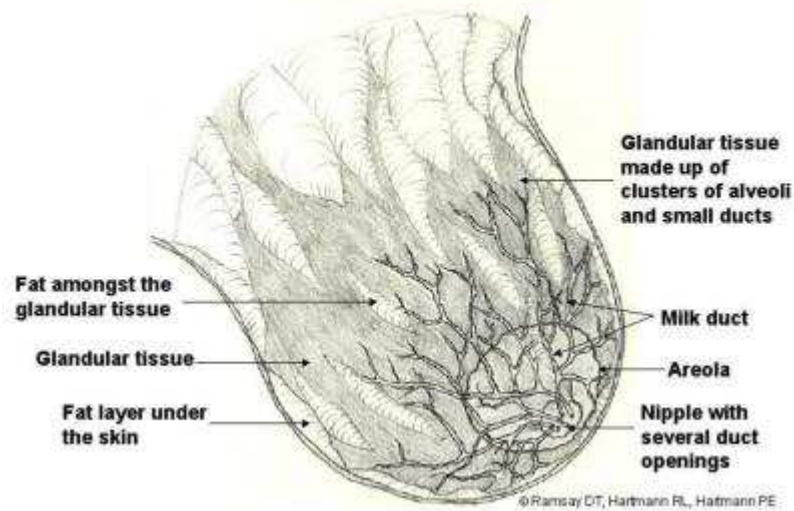
If you are expressing for a newborn baby, try to express frequently, between 8 - 10 times in 24 hours. Regular removal of milk increases and maintains your milk supply. You may find it easier to express for shorter periods but more frequently. The number of expressions during the day is more important than the length of time spent expressing. Many mothers find a routine of two to three-hourly expressions during the day, with an expression just before going to bed works for them, while others find they need to modify this routine. Supply and response to expressing varies between mothers, so you may have to experiment to find a routine that suits you. Each expression may be up to 20-30 minutes, or until milk no longer flows out but just drips. Some mothers set an alarm to express at night, however others find this too tiring. Be guided by what your body tells you is best for you.

How Breastmilk is made:

An important factor in milk production, and hence expressing breastmilk, is the *let-down* reflex. This causes the milk to be released from the glandular tissue after the nipple has been stimulated adequately. Nipple stimulation sends a message to the brain, which causes the hormone oxytocin to be released. The let-down reflex occurs when this hormone causes the cells around the milk glands to contract and squeeze the milk out.

This reflex can be hindered by pain, tension or stress. You can help the let-down reflex work by: relaxing, taking deep breaths, listening to soothing music; thinking about your baby, a photo sometimes helps; placing a warm (not too hot) face washer over the breast; massaging your breast with smooth strokes from the outer edge to the nipple and drawing your nipple out gently between your fingers; sitting in a comfortable position; perhaps making sure the phone is off the hook, your toddler (if you have one) is safe and you have a warm or cool drink handy. As milk is removed from your breasts, more milk will be made. Your milk supply will depend on how often you express along with how well the breasts are drained.

ANATOMY OF THE HUMAN BREAST



If you have been expressing every feed for your baby, and he has not been feeding from your breast for a while, then prior to fully breastfeeding him you may need to adjust the number of times you express to equal the number of feeds he is having. This will adjust your supply to meet your baby's needs. Your baby may need a little time to learn to milk the breast effectively, so take each feed as it comes. Many mothers find talking to a trained ABA breastfeeding counsellor very helpful in providing support and information at this time.

Using The Pump - Helpful Suggestions

1. Assemble the clean electric breast pump kit according to the manufacturer's instructions. There will be written instructions with the kit and you would have been shown how to put it together by the counsellor from whom you hired the pump. If you have any questions please ring the counsellor so you know you have it connected properly.
2. Set the pump to the lowest possible suction setting. Try to stimulate a *let-down*, by using some of the suggestions above. When applying the breast cup make sure the nipple is in the centre, also that the cup has good skin contact all around to prevent air entering. If your nipple hurts when you start expressing with the pump, then stop and check to make sure the nipple is centered in the breast cup.
3. When you are starting to express, for the first few times, many mothers find it helps to keep the expression time short, then lengthen the session gradually. Some mothers find it useful to change breasts several times during the expressing session. If you use a double collection kit, the session will be shorter than expressing with a single kit.

Once you are feeling comfortable with actually using the pump, you may like to increase the suction setting to a comfortable level, if you need. Keep the kit upright whilst expressing to prevent milk from entering the tubing. If milk does enter the tubing stop the pump and rinse tubing with water. It is best not to use the pump when the tubing is wet, particularly in pumps where there is a direct connection from tubing to the interior of the pump.

In the latter case, water may enter the pump and cause damage. In pumps with a closed kit, slight dampness or condensation in the tubing should not be a problem. However, after expressing with damp tubing, it is a good idea to disassemble the kit to allow all parts to dry.

4. In the first few days or so after birth only small amounts of milk are produced called colostrum. Expressing by hand is the most suitable method at this stage. Mothers then experience a lot more milk as the milk *comes in*. An electric breast pump can now be used. The supply settles down within a few weeks to meet the babies' needs. The mother of a premature baby produces different milk to the mother of a term baby, with her milk being more suited to her baby's level of maturity. Be guided by your medical advisers regarding your baby's feeding needs. More milk will be produced as you get used to expressing.
5. While you still have colostrum present in your breasts, the milk will have a yellow tinge and may be rather creamy. It will separate on standing. The colour of colostrum from different mothers can vary markedly; so don't be surprised if yours looks quite different to another mother's. This is quite

normal. As your milk production increases, the colour becomes more bluish/white, and still separates on standing so that the creamy portion is at the top. Milk may have a different appearance at different times of the day and depending on how long since you have expressed or fed your baby. The colour of milk can vary widely over time and it can be quite normal for your milk to look different to another mother's; *your* milk is right for *your* baby.

6. Some mothers find that while expressing for many weeks their supply may decrease. Your baby is more efficient at draining your breast than a pump. When you are able to put your baby to the breast, you will find your supply will increase, with frequent feeds. If you are unable to put your baby to the breast, more frequent expression will increase your supply. You may later be able to return to your previous expressing schedule.

Many mothers have found that finishing off each expression with a few minutes of hand expressing will increase breast drainage and help increase milk supply. If concerned, you may wish to contact your breastfeeding counsellor to discuss the situation.

7. When you hired the pump you were given the phone number of an ABA breastfeeding counsellor. Please do not hesitate to call her if any of the following happen: your pump is not working (please check pump instructions); your milk supply seems to be dropping; you feel the pump is not helping you; or you need someone to talk to. Do contact her at least weekly to let her know how you are getting on.

Disinfecting Information

Here are some important points about cleaning and disinfecting. Please note that thorough cleaning is important when using your milk collection kit and/or bottles.

Remember, you must clean and disinfect your kit before use, as a new kit is NOT disinfected. Disinfection can be carried out by using an appropriate antibacterial solution, steaming or by boiling. Household disinfectants or bleach are not suitable. Appropriate antibacterial solutions are generally available at chemists and supermarkets.

Care of breast pump kit for your own use

If you are the only person to use your breast pump kit and if your baby is healthy and full term, breast pump kit parts should be:

1. Thoroughly rinsed in cold water after each use to remove surface milk and stored in a thoroughly cleaned, closed container.
2. Thoroughly cleaned after each six hour period of use (as detailed below).
3. Disinfected once daily when in use.

If your baby is hospitalised or ill, be guided by your caregiver's instructions

Thorough Cleaning

1. First wash your hands thoroughly. Take the breast pump kit apart, and separate all pieces. Rinse all the parts that have been in contact with your milk, in cold water.
2. Completely remove all traces of grease, milk and dirt etc with a small amount of dishwashing liquid and hot water. Do not use soap. Use a brush kept especially for this purpose.
3. Rinse everything in hot water, at least twice
4. Place parts on a clean towel (paper/cloth) and cover with another clean towel while they air dry, or dry them with a clean towel. Store dry kit in a new plastic bag, plastic wrap or clean covered container until next use.

Boiling method of disinfecting

1. Thoroughly clean all parts as outlined above.
2. Completely immerse all parts in water, bring to the boil and continue to boil rapidly (completely submerged) for five minutes uninterrupted.
3. Remove the items without touching the inside surfaces. Long-handled tongs, which have been

disinfected with the parts, may be useful. Shake the parts to remove excess water.

4. Place to dry on paper towels. You may wish to place lids on containers while still warm, as they may shrink as they cool and not fit. Make sure your hands are clean first.
5. If not using straight away, store as above.

Chemical solution method of disinfecting

1. Thoroughly clean all parts as outlined above. Make up a fresh appropriate anti-bacteria solution according to the manufacturer's instructions and completely immerse all items for at least one hour.
2. Check that none of the items contains air bubbles.
3. Follow sections 3, 4 and 5 as above. Discard the solution after 24 hours.
4. Thoroughly scrub the solution container and equipment in warm soapy water.

Steaming method of disinfecting

Electric steam units or those for the microwave can also be used to disinfect your expressing and feeding equipment. Simply follow the manufacturer's instructions. **Warning:** Take care using steam units, as some milk collection kits will melt if disinfected in a steamer. Please check first with your milk collection kit instructions or the counsellor who hired you the pump.

Suggested Further Reading

- ABA Booklets: *Expressing and Storing Breastmilk*; *Breastfeeding your Premature Baby*; *Increasing your Supply and Breastfeeding Women and Work*.
- *Breastfeeding... naturally* 2nd edn.. ABA's top-selling book

All available from your local [Group](#) or [Mothers Direct](#).

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Some general tips to help with expressing breast milk

General suggestions include:

- Give yourself time to learn how to express milk properly; it is a learned skill like any other. Don't hesitate to ask for professional help.
- Aim to express at least every three to four hours to avoid breast engorgement. This is an uncomfortable condition and engorged breasts are difficult to express
- Express as often as you would breastfeed in order to maintain your milk supply. For example, if your baby feeds six times over a 24-hour period, you need to express at least six times.
- Express more often if you find you cannot keep up with your baby's demands. You may need to express every two hours during the daytime for one to two days.
- If your baby cannot breast feed and you are trying to establish your milk supply, you will need to express ten to twelve times over a 24 hour period
- Express at least once overnight to maintain your milk supply. There are very few women who can maintain a good milk supply over a prolonged period if their breasts do not have milk removed at least every four to five hours. Prolactin, the milk-making hormone, is at its highest level in the body between midnight and 4am, so expressing during this time ensures a better milk supply.

Supplementary feeds

Avoid using supplementary bottles of formula. Your breasts operate on a system of 'supply and demand'. If breast milk is removed, your body will make more; if you leave it in your breasts, you will stop making milk.

Storage suggestions

Breast milk must be stored correctly to reduce the potential for bacterial growth. Suggestions include:

- Use fresh breast milk whenever possible.
- Express into clean and sterilised containers. These may be glass, plastic or sealable plastic bags.
- Label each container with the time and date the breast milk was expressed
- Refrigerate the breast milk within one hour of expressing.
- Store breast milk in the back of the fridge where it is coolest (4°C or lower), not in the fridge door, if you are going to use it within the next three to five days.
- Freeze excess breast milk if you produce more milk than your baby requires.
- Freeze the breast milk immediately if you are not going to use it in the next few days.
- Do not top up refrigerated or frozen breast milk with fresh breast milk unless it has been chilled first.
- The shelf life of frozen breast milk depends on your freezer. If your freezer is inside the fridge, storage time is two weeks. If your freezer is separate from the fridge with its own door, storage time is up to three months. Breast milk can be stored for six -12 months in a deep freezer (-18°C or lower).

Thawing and heating of breast milk

Breast milk must be thawed and heated correctly to reduce the potential for bacterial growth.

- Thaw frozen breast milk by moving it from the freezer to the fridge for slow thawing over 24 hours.
- You can also run cold water over the container and gradually increase the temperature of the water. Do not overheat the milk as it will destroy much of the nutrients and may burn the baby's mouth.
- **Never** use the microwave. It is a potentially dangerous practice as it can cause 'hot spots' in the milk that may burn your baby's mouth.
- Frozen breast milk, which is thawed in the fridge (but not heated) will last 24 hours in the fridge and four hours at room temperature. It cannot be refrozen.
- If it has been thawed outside the fridge, using warm water, it will last for four hours in the fridge, but cannot be refrozen.

Hygiene is important

Unwashed hands, unclean pumps and bottle-feeding equipment, can contaminate breast milk. Hygiene suggestions include:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before expressing.
- Make sure all equipment, including the breast pump and bottles, are clean.

If you are using your own expressing equipment and are not sharing it with anyone else, there is no need to sterilise the equipment after each use. Washing it in hot soapy water, rinsing in hot water and storing in a clean covered container is adequate. However, you must sterilise all bottles and teats after each feed.

Where to get help

- Australian Breastfeeding Association Tel. (03) 9885 0855
- Lactation Resource Centre Tel. (03) 9885 0855. Excellent source of information on topics related to infant feeding
- Breastfeeding Day Clinic - many hospitals have a day stay program, which assists women with infant feeding problems. The Royal Women's Hospital Breastfeeding Education and Support Services is open week days 8am - 4.30pm. Tel. (03) 9344 3651
- Your local doctor
- Midwife from the hospital where you gave birth
- Lactation consultant - a list of private lactation consultants practising in your area can be found online at <http://www.alca.asn.au/find.html>
- Maternal and Child Health nurse - contact your local Council for the address of your nearest MCH Centre
- Maternal and Child Health Line (24 hours) Tel. 132 229
- Parentline (24 hours) Tel. 132 289

Things to remember

- Breast milk can be expressed by hand, or with a manual or electric breast pump.
- Breast milk must be stored correctly to keep it free from contamination.
- See your doctor, midwife, lactation consultant or a trained counsellor if you have any concerns regarding infant feeding.