

## Pumping is an excellent alternative for breastfed babies!

There are a variety of reasons why a mother might want or need to pump: for preemie or sick infants; to increase supply; to maintain supply; for when Mom goes back to work, to name some. The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to address those situations when Mom may need to pump for her babies. Following are some tips for expressing breast milk:

- 1) Begin regular pumping as soon as possible after their births. Short, frequent sessions are better than long, infrequent sessions.
- 2) Choose a quiet, private spot with comfortable seating.
- 3) Moms of multiples will usually double pump for efficiency and because they are typically set for simultaneous letdown. Using a double pump will allow you to take advantage of the simultaneous letdown. In addition, double pumping saves a lot of time rather than pumping one breast at a time.
- 4) When nursing one baby, pumping the other side takes advantage of the simultaneous letdown. This may help with better milk production so that one multiple, who may be having difficulty breastfeeding, also has enough milk available. Getting organized for such a scenario may take a little practice.
- 5) To help establish the proper 'mood' for expressing, have photos of your babies around you, perhaps listen to a tape of soft music.
- 6) Dad/Partner can massage Mom's back, shoulders and neck to help with relaxation. Bring her a drink, keep Mom company, wash, sterilize pumping bottles/tubing so they are ready for the next session.
- 7) Surround Mom with proper support to ensure a successful pumping session.
- 8) Eat nutritiously, rest, minimize stress levels and drink plenty of fluids.
- 9) Typically, newborns breastfeed 8 times or up to 12 to 14 times in 24 hours. Simulating a newborn's feeding routine helps produce more milk. While each pumping session may take 10-20 minutes, the length of time will vary with each woman. Continue to pump as long as you have a good flow.\*
- 10) The opposite will also help with milk supply: pumping when there is low or no flow, helps stimulate the breasts for the next day.\*
- 11) Keep a record of the date and time of pumping and how much is collected. This will clarify if pumping is occurring often enough to keep the breasts stimulated to produce.
- 12) To keep on a newborn's nursing schedule, set a timer during the night to ensure that you wake up and pump at appropriate intervals.

### Storing and Handling Expressed Breast Milk

Most Neonatal Intensive Care Unit's (NICU) have procedures in place for storing and handling expressed breast milk. If your babies are in the NICU, you will need to acquaint yourselves with their regulations. Ask the staff if the hospital provides sterile containers for expressed milk. Your hands will need to be thoroughly cleaned as will all parts of the pump that come in contact with your milk. Sterile containers will need to be clearly labelled with each baby's name, date of expression, and perhaps a hospital identifying code prior to being placed in the refrigerator. If you are on any medications at all, you may need to also note what they are on the container label.



## **Breast Milk can be stored in clean, sterile containers:**

At room temperature (25C or 77F) for 4 hours

In a refrigerator (not the door) for 48 hours [fresh]

In a refrigerator (not the door) for 24 hours [frozen]

In a refrigerator freezer compartment for 2 weeks

In a freezer compartment with a separate door for 3-4 months

In a deep freeze for 6 months

Frozen breast milk takes no time at all to thaw in a saucepan filled with warm water.

*Do not heat breast milk on a stove or in a microwave. Do not refreeze breast milk.*

## **Sore Nipples**

If nipples become sore during pumping, make sure that your nipples are properly centred within the suction cup. It is easy to become distracted during pumping and inadvertently shift the equipment. Some mothers report that applying a small amount of modified lanolin cream is helpful. If problems continue, contact a Lactation Consultant or La Leche League member. Don't wait for the pain to become severe.

## **Types of Pumps:**

*Electric:* efficient, thorough, expensive, can be rented by day, week or month

*Battery:* good for occasional pumping or not near electrical outlets, not as efficient as electric

*Manual:* takes a long time to pump, not practical for women who pump often, inexpensive

*Hand Expression:* difficult for some to master, inefficient, helpful for emergency such as engorgement.

Some considerations: Find out about the level of suction of the pump. Some can be very strong and some inefficient. Are the instructions for using it clear? Does the company have a 1-800 number if you need to ask questions? Some drugstores and hospitals rent pumps, which can be quite expensive. Some Lactation Consultants offer rentals. Check out the Yellow Pages. Do your homework to find out what works for you.

## References

\*Mothinger Multiples: Breastfeeding & Caring for Twins or More!!! by Karen Kerkhoff Gromada, La Leche League Int'l, 1999, (Revised Edition now available)

## **Multiple Births Canada Fact Sheets on various multiple birth related topics**

Developed & adapted by Lynda P. Haddon - Multiple Birth Educator – [www.multiplebirthsfamilies.com](http://www.multiplebirthsfamilies.com)

## **Recommended Sources of Information:**

La Leche League of Canada Referral Service

[www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

Lactation Consulting Services Canada

[www.breastfeedinghelp.ca](http://www.breastfeedinghelp.ca)

MBC Breastfeeding Peer Support Network

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