

My Pregnancy Journey

Pumping Milk for Your Baby in the NICU



Wellstar supports your breastfeeding journey, as you provide breast milk for your baby in the NICU. While breastfeeding may be challenging at times, breast milk is the best gift you can give your baby. We are here for you and your little one during this special time.

When should I begin pumping?

In the hospital, we recommend that you start pumping within 6 hours after birth if possible. A lactation consultant or your nurse will provide a hospital-grade, double-electric breast pump and instructions on how to begin pumping. Follow-up pump support is available, as needed.

How do I prepare to pump?

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before pumping and before handling milk collection equipment.
- Place the pump flanges on your breasts so that your nipples are centered in the flange tunnel. A lactation consultant can help determine which size pump flange is right for you.
- Slowly increase the suction setting to the highest level that is comfortable for you. Pumping should not be painful. Turn down the suction, as needed, if it causes discomfort.
- **Pump at least 8 to 10 times in 24 hours, about every 2 to 3 hours.** Pump both breasts 15 to 20 minutes at each pumping session.

A lactation consultant can help you develop a pumping plan that works for you.

What can I expect the first few days?

During the first few days postpartum, you may only pump small amounts of thick, sticky milk called colostrum. Colostrum may be clear or yellowish in color and is full of nutrients and antibodies. Even if you pump very little or no milk at all during the first few days, don't get discouraged. Your milk supply will increase over the next few days and weeks with continued frequent pumping.

Breast milk is produced on a supply and demand basis. This means that the more milk you pump, the more milk you will make.

What if I miss a pumping session?

If you miss a session, don't worry. Resume pumping as soon as you can and get back to your regular pumping schedule.

What about supplies?

In the hospital, you will receive a pump kit that contains all of the pieces you need to start pumping. You will also be provided with special collection containers to store your milk and labels for your containers. A cleaning kit will be given to you, which includes dish soap, bottle brushes, and instructions on how to clean your pump parts.

Remember to record on the label the time and date that you pumped your breast milk. Attach the label to the container of milk.

How do I clean my pump pieces?

Pump pieces should be taken apart and cleaned after each use with hot, soapy water, rinsed well, and air dried. Use the dish soap and bottle brushes provided in the cleaning kit to wash your pump pieces. Do not submerge the tubing in water.

Preparing for your discharge from the hospital

When you are discharged from the hospital and your baby needs to stay in the NICU, it is best to continue using a hospital-grade, double-electric breast pump at home for best breast stimulation and maximum milk production.

If you are on the WIC program, you may be able to get a hospital grade breast pump loaner from WIC.

If you are not on the WIC program, you may choose to rent a hospital-grade breast pump. Ask a lactation consultant if your hospital rents breast pumps.

If your hospital does not rent pumps, the lactation consultant will give you resources in your area that rent pumps.

Speak with your insurance company about getting a standard double-electric breast pump, or personal pump, for future use when you no longer need a hospital-grade pump. Ask a lactation consultant for more information.

Take all pieces in your pump kit home with you when you leave the hospital. This includes the tubing with attached cap, flanges, and membranes. You will need these pump parts when using your WIC loaner or rental pump.

After your discharge, continue pumping at least 8 to 10 times every 24 hours

If necessary, give yourself a break of 5 to 6 hours once a day without pumping. You may want to take this break at night. After this break, resume your pumping schedule.

After your discharge, continue to wash your pump parts, rinse well, and air-dry thoroughly after each use. Sanitize your pump parts at least once a day for extra protection.

Clean the wash basin and bottle brushes used to clean your pump parts after each use. Rinse both well and allow them to air dry thoroughly after each use.

Follow all special cleaning guidelines recommended by the NICU at your hospital. Speak with a lactation consultant or NICU nurse with any further questions and guidance.

Pump enhancing tips

Here are some suggestions that you may find helpful when pumping:

- Rest for 10 to 15 minutes before pumping.
- Eat a snack and drink water before pumping.
- Gently massage your breasts before pumping.
- Hand express each breast after pumping.
- Use lots of pillows to get comfortable. Prop your feet, close your eyes, and take deep relaxed breaths.
- Pump at your baby's bedside when you visit the NICU.
- Pump at home in a quiet place with soft dim lights.
- Listen to relaxing music or sounds of nature while pumping.
- Look at a video or picture of your baby while pumping.
- Use a pumping bra to allow for hands-free pumping. Massage and compress your breasts while pumping to increase milk flow and better empty your breasts.
- During the process, stay relaxed. Remind yourself that your breast milk is a special gift that only you can give to your baby.

Why is hand expression important?

Combining pumping with hand expression has been shown to help establish an abundant milk supply. A lactation consultant will show you how to hand express your breast milk.

Visit stanford.edu and search for "hand expression" for an instructional video demonstration.

How much milk should I be pumping?

One week after delivery, you should be pumping 16 ounces of milk in 24 hours, if you delivered a single baby, or 20 ounces in 24 hours, if you delivered

twins. After two weeks, the total volume of milk pumped in 24 hours should be 24 to 32 ounces, if you delivered a single baby, and 36 ounces if delivered twins.

What if my milk supply is low or decreasing?

If you are struggling with your milk supply, speak with a lactation consultant for tips to increase your milk supply.

How do I store my pumped milk at home?

Refrigerate or freeze your milk within one hour of pumping. Speak with a NICU nurse about whether you should refrigerate or freeze your milk when at home.

How do I transport my milk from home to the NICU?

Refrigerated milk can be packed in ice in a cooler for transporting to the hospital. Frozen milk can be transported in a cooler with freezer gel packs to keep it frozen during transport to the hospital. Speak with a NICU nurse if you need more information and have any questions.

What are the benefits of skin-to-skin?

As soon as your baby's health permits, hold your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible. Skin-to-skin provides many benefits for you and your baby. Take advantage of this special bonding time. Your baby and milk supply will thank you.

When can I start breastfeeding?

Your baby may begin to show interest in breastfeeding. Signs include by sticking out their tongue, licking lips, putting hands to their mouth or rooting toward the breast. These cues are the first signs that your baby may be ready to learn how to breastfeed. A lactation consultant or NICU Nurse will help with breast practice when your baby is ready.



Who can I contact for help?

We are here to support you with all of your pumping and breastfeeding needs while your baby is in the NICU. You may continue to get pumping and breastfeeding support even after your baby is discharged from the NICU. Please call the Lactation Department at your hospital with any questions, concerns or to schedule an appointment.

Wellstar Breastfeeding Helplines

If you have any questions or concerns, please call one of the Wellstar Breastfeeding Helplines below:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Acworth
(470) 956-0055 | Kennestone
(770) 793-8087 |
| Cobb
(770) 732-5247 | North Fulton
(770) 751-2686 |
| Douglas
(470) 644-6152 | Spalding
(770) 228-2721 |

Pumping Diary

Date	Time	Minutes Pumped	Amount Pumped	Amount Needed Per Feeding	Comment or Questions