

The Mama of All Breast Pumping Guides

 narranest.com/blogs/news/guide_to_breast_pumping

September 15, 2016

Breastfeeding is a beautiful, natural choice many mothers make. It's kind to their children and to the Earth.

Modern day mamas have unique breastfeeding needs and goals. Some mothers pump to increase supply, or to feed their children exclusively through a bottle. Other mothers pump to donate or to send to their child's daycare. Some mamas pump occasionally just to take a break from night feedings and give daddy a turn. Whatever your nursing and pumping goals, we're here to support you! This guide is designed to be a one-stop resource for all your pumping needs - the mama of all breast pumping guides ;) To help support you in implementing all of this information, I've created a free Pumping Care Package, designed to support your breast pumping journey. Just click the image below to download:



Your Mama Bird
BREAST PUMPING
Care Package Includes:

- GUIDED RELAXATION AUDIO MP3
- IPHONE SCREENSAVERS
- PRINTABLE BREAST MILK STORAGE GUIDELINES
- PRINTABLE PUMPING GOALS WORKSHEET
- PRINTABLE COPY OF BLOG POST

Narra Nest

Disclaimer: I am not a lactation consultant or medical professional. The wisdom and advice shared in this post is mama to mama, not provider to client. You assume all responsibility and risk when implementing any of these suggestions. Additionally, I have no affiliate relationships with any brands mentioned. I am not receiving any compensation for my recommendations. The products and resources listed are simply ones I found useful in my breastfeeding journey.

We are so unique, and different ideas work for different people. That's why we've put together so many tips for you! Give the ones that feel okay a try and discard what doesn't work for your family.

The guide is divided into the following sections, for easy access and reading:

- [Things To Know Before You Start](#)
- [The Gear](#)
 - **Breast Pump**
 - **Nipple creams**
 - **Hands free pumping bras**
 - **Pump bag**
 - **Milk storage bags**
 - **Cleaning tools**
- [Set Up For Success](#)
- [Techniques for More Comfortable, Efficient Pumping](#)
 - **Hands On Pumping**
 - **Hand Expression**
 - **Nipple and Breast Comfort**
 - **Self Care**
- [Storing Expressed Breastmilk](#)
 - **What Does Pumped Milk Look Like?**
 - **A Note About Milk Freshness & Lipase**
- [Pumping Routines](#)
 - **Boosting Supply**
 - **Pumping to Bottle Feed**
 - **Occasional Pumping**
 - **Building A Stash**
- [Caring For Your Pump](#)
- [Galactagogues](#)
- [Pumping At Work Or While Traveling](#)
- [Weaning Off Your Pump](#)
- [Resources For The Breastfeeding Mom](#)

Let's begin!

Things To Know Before You Start

Pumping, like breastfeeding, is equal parts relational, mental, and physical. It is a relationship that must be mutually

beneficial and desirable for all involved. It is a mindset, a way of life that the pumping mom chooses to adopt. And pumping has many physical elements that must all work in concert to be successful.

Things to keep in mind as you being pumping:

- Pumping output doesn't always equal nursing output.
- Pumping is biologically different than nursing at the breast; anticipate this difference and make accommodations to get maximum output.
- As with nursing at the breast, it is vital to maintain a rhythm. When introducing a pump, your body must account for a new set of conditions under which to produce milk. Staying consistent will help preserve that capacity.
- When the going gets tough, remembering your goals will help you persevere through any challenges.

Speaking of pumping goals, let's define those now.

Complete these statements to get an idea of why expressing breastmilk for your baby is important to you. As you read the recommendations outlined in this article, keep your big picture in mind.

My goal for pumping is _____.

It is important to me that _____.

I will nourish my baby by _____.

I will self care by _____.

A MAMA BIRD'S PUMPING GOALS

My goal for pumping is _____.
It is important to me that _____.
I will nourish my baby by _____.
I will self care by _____.



Narra Nest

Download Your Free Printable
Breast Pumping Goal Worksheet

The Gear

Pumping milk can seem overwhelming at first, simply because of all the extras that are needed! Let's break down the gear you'll need.

- **Breast Pump**

As with most breastfeeding choices, your goals will largely impact what you need in a breast pump. If you plan to only offer your baby expressed milk occasionally, a simple electric or manual pump should suffice. If you will need to pump frequently or exclusively, it will be worth the investment to use a higher power electric pump or even rent a hospital grade pump. (Particularly if your baby is in the NICU or has frequent hospital stays, ask your facility about a breast pump rental.)

A tip from personal experience, it might be a good idea to wait until baby arrives and breastfeeding has begun before purchasing a pump. You may plan to pump only occasionally, but early hiccups in establishing breastfeeding might mean you pump more frequently for a while. This happened to me. I bought a simple single electric pump, but ended up purchasing a more top of the line double pump when I began needing to pump several times per day. Personally, I use a [Medela Freestyle](#). I've also heard [Ameda's double pumps](#) come highly recommended. Many breastfeeding professionals recommend [Spectra](#) pump models.



Taking your goals into consideration, these are a few questions you can ask about the features of your breast pump:

- Are extra milk collection bottles included in the pump? Or does the pump come with a cooler to keep plastic bags of expressed milk?
- Does the pump come with its own carrying bag? If not, will I need to purchase one? Do I have a designated, sanitary way to transport my pump?
- Is the pump dependant on an electrical outlet? Does it have a rechargeable battery option?
- Due to safety concerns, it is not a good idea to purchase a used pump. Additionally, a used pump may not be as efficient due to wear and tear on the motor.

Canadian Mamas: Check with your insurance provider, some offer coverage of breast pumps.

US Mamas: “The Affordable Care Act requires most health insurance plans to cover the cost of a breast pump as part of women’s preventative health services.” [Visit HHS.gov for more information.](#)

• Nipple creams

Nipple cream can be a total lifesaver for a nursing mom! It’s common for nipples to feel a bit sore after nursing, especially for first time moms. A good nipple cream can provide needed relief and protection. Creams can also be useful to soften the breast tissue and nipple, making it easier for your baby to latch. Apply after each feeding -- and don’t worry, it’s safe for baby.

If you are having excessive nipple pain or damage, seek help! Many nursing moms are told the unfortunate myth that breastfeeding is supposed to be painful. While soreness is common, it is not necessarily good! If you are experiencing sore, cracked, or bleeding nipples, you may consider using cream for immediate relief, but schedule an appointment with a breastfeeding professional to check for issues.

Nipple cream can also be helpful for pumping. I would put a bit of nipple cream inside of the flanges before I pumped, which made it much more comfortable!

A few nipple cream brands I recommend are:

- [Earth Mama Angel Baby Natural Nipple Butter](#)
- [Lansinoh® HPA® Lanolin](#)

• Hands free pumping bras

Today’s mamas are a busy bunch! A hands free pumping bra can be a useful tool for pumping moms. The option for hands free pumping is enticing to many moms, and makes expressing milk even more accessible. As we’ll discuss later in this guide, a hands free bra also allows you to easily do ‘hands on pumping’, which can boost output.

For the Pinterest-savvy mama, you can make a DIY hands free pumping bra. This was my choice. I put on an old bra, and drew dots with a Sharpie on the bra where my nipples were. Then, I cut little slits for the flanges. (For those interested, KellyMom has a [DIY hands-free pumping bra tutorial](#) on her website.)

If you want to purchase a pumping bra, a few options are:

• Pump bag

Many pumps these days include a custom-fitted carry bag, but you can also purchase your own bag, or designate a bag you already own to do the job.

These pump bags are stylish, convenient options:

Or you may choose to purchase a pump with a custom, included bag.

- [Medela Pump in Style Advanced](#)
- [Spectra Baby USA S2 Hospital Pump with Tote and Cooler](#)

• Milk storage bags

While you can easily store expressed milk in bottles, many moms use plastic bags for freezing and easier longer

storage.

If you're pumping to donate breast milk, you will need to thoroughly detail the contents (name, date, ounces) and possibly include donor identification information.

Popular milk storage bag options include:

- [Lansinoh Breastmilk Storage Bags](#)
- [Medela Pump & Save Bags](#)
- [Kiinde Storage & Feeding Kit](#)

• **Cleaning tools**

Properly sanitizing your pump, milk collection containers, and bottles is important! Not only will proper sanitation protect your milk and your baby from contaminants, it will extend the life of your pump and accessories.

Here are cleaning tools I regularly use:

- [munchkin Steam Guard™ Microwave Sterilizer](#)
- [munchkin LATCH™ Bottle and Valve Brush](#)
- [boon Grass Countertop Drying Rack](#)

Set Up for Success

When nursing your babe in your arms, you have all you need for a lovely oxytocin rush to trigger a let down and milk production. When pumping, you need to intentionally create an environment that allows you to feel relaxed and comfortable enough to allow your body to let down. I'll list several ideas that have helped me create an ideal space for pumping.

- **Have water (and a snack!) on hand. Your body is working hard to make milk for your baby! Stay hydrated and nourished to get the best results. Take care of yourself.**
- **Turn down the lights. Dim lighting allows your body to relax. Additionally, many moms find pumping a bit awkward and possibly even embarrassing. Low lights can help you feel protected and safe.**
- **Listen to calm or soothing music. Similar effect of dimming lights. Can also calm nerves, and help you pass the time of pumping.**
- **Look at a picture of your baby. Many breastfeeding professionals suggest that looking at a picture of your baby while pumping will trigger hormonal responses and help your milk let down. Smelling a blanket or piece of clothing with their scent on it might help too.**
- **Don't stare down your collection bottles. I find worrying about my output stressful, and so I don't produce as much. Throw a light swaddling blanket over the bottles if you need to. Be calm and relaxed. Let the milk flow.**
- **Guided relaxation. Personally, I have found spoken affirmations and guided relaxation to be very beneficial in my pumping experience. My thoughts on the strategy were shaped by Stephen Feher's study on guided relaxation as a galactagogue. In summary, researchers compared the effects of guided relaxation on milk production (in this study, mothers of infants in the NICU). The average difference in milk production between the two groups was 63%! The impact of guided relaxation on my pumping was phenomenal. Not**

only did it increase my output, it made pumping a more relaxed and enjoyable experience. I've included a free guided relaxation track, which we've created specifically for pumping mamas, for you to use. Give it a try and let me how it works for you!



Techniques for More Comfortable, Efficient Pumping

A universal goal of pumping mothers is to express the most milk possible! Makes sense. Breastmilk runs on a supply and demand model. The greater amount of milk that is removed from the breast (a high demand), a greater amount of milk is created (a high supply).



Here are some go-to techniques many mothers use when pumping to increase the amount of milk they remove from their breasts:

- **Hands on Pumping**

Adding in breast compressions or massage while pumping can stimulate more milk removal from the breast, which will prompt more milk creation. Compressions were made popular by the work of Dr. Jack Newman and the International Breastfeeding Centre. With your hand in a C-shape, squeeze and hold the breast until milk is expressed, then release.

Incorporating breast massage can also stimulate milk production while pumping. The "Massage-Stroke-Shake" (M-S-S) technique as described by La Leche League is a commonly practiced one. Their method is as follows:

1. Double pump for about five minutes, and pause.
2. "Massage both breasts simultaneously in a circular motion, similar to a breast self-exam."
3. "Stroke both breasts all the way around from the chest wall to the tip of the nipple in a straight line using only your fingertips."
4. "Then cup each breast with your hand, lean forward, and gently shake your breasts."
5. Pump another 5-7 minutes and M-S-S.
6. Finish with a final 5-7 minute pumping session.

If you'd like to see exactly how to use your hands when pumping, this video is great:

<http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/MaxProduction.html>

• Hand Expression

Every nursing mom should know how to hand express! It can be helpful when you need to relieve just a bit of pressure, and some moms even find hand expression is more efficient than using an electric pump. Mothers with children in the NICU may also benefit from hand expressing milk, to ensure their supply stays strong.

The basics of hand expression are fairly straightforward :

1. Gently massage your breasts. (Think of this as 'priming the pump'!)
2. Sit up straight and lean forward. (Gravity will help your milk flow.)
3. "To find your "sweet spot," start with your thumb on top of the breast and fingers below it, both about 1.5 inches (4 cm) from the base of the nipple. Some mothers find it helpful to curl their hand and use just the tips of their fingers and thumb. Several times, apply steady pressure into the breast toward the chest wall. If no milk comes, shift finger and thumb either closer to or farther from the nipple and compress again a few times. Repeat, moving finger and thumb until you feel slightly firmer breast tissue, and gentle pressure yields milk. After you've found your "sweet spot," skip the "finding" phase and start with your fingers on this area."
4. Give steady pressure to your 'sweet spot' by pressing your fingers in toward your chest, rather than your nipple.
5. While giving this steady pressure, compress thumb and finger pads together. (Push, don't pull.) You'll want to follow a Press—Compress—Relax pattern.
6. "Switch breasts every few minutes (five or six times in total at each expression) while rotating finger position around the breast. After expressing, all areas of the breast should feel soft. This process usually takes about 20 to 30 minutes."

Stanford Medicine produced [a video tutorial on hand expression](#) which I found helpful. Our tride and true friend KellyMom.com :) put together [a wonderful collection of articles and tips on hand expression](#) that I like.

• Nipple and Breast Comfort

Your comfort isn't just a bonus, it's crucial to your body's ability to let down and will have a big impact on your pumping output. Pumping should be comfortable!

An ill-fitting flange can restrict the amount of milk a mother is able to express. Your flange should fit like a glove! Many mothers find an increase in the amount of milk they're able to produce when they adjust flange size. This [video tutorial helpfully explains how a flange should fit](#). These [flange-fit diagrams from Ameda](#) are also helpful.

Many breast pump models have settings that allow you to adjust the suction, and it's a good idea to experiment with the suction settings on your pump. Some (like many Medela models) have a 'let down' setting. You can try cycling back to the 'let down' setting a couple of times each session to produce additional let downs. If pumping is painful, try to adjust the suction to a lesser level. It may seem that stronger is better, but many moms find that turning down the suction will actually yield more milk and increase comfort.

You can also try rubbing a bit of nipple cream inside the flanges. This can help your nipples to glide more freely and, hence, be more comfortable.

• Self care

Pumping can be a truly beautiful, wonderful way to bond with your baby from afar. But it can also be a lot of work! A tired and stressed mama will have a harder time expressing milk and maintaining her supply than a rested, relaxed one. Take a break when you need to. Recognize the hard work you're doing for your baby and appreciate yourself. Try to take some time each day just for you. Relax in a big bubble bath or take an extra long shower. Encourage yourself if things get tough or tiring. I found that it helped to save an encouraging image to my phone screensaver as a gentle reminder of my goals.



Storing Expressed Breastmilk

You want to take care of the milk you worked so hard to produce! Storing expressed milk isn't hard, but you do need to be aware of the guidelines.

According to the experts:

- Fresh milk can be stored at room temperature for 4 hours.
- Fresh milk can be stored in an insulated cooler for 24 hours.
- Fresh milk can be stored in a refrigerator for 72 hours.
- Frozen milk can last in a freezer for 3 to 6 months.
- Frozen milk will keep in a deep freezer 6 to 12 months.

(See section *Pumping at Work or Traveling* below for more on traveling with stored milk, especially on airlines.)

To prepare a bottle of thawed breast milk, set the frozen milk into a container of heated water or use a bottle warmer. Never microwave or heat human on a stove!



Breastmilk Storage Guidelines

AT ROOM TEMPERATURE	4 HOURS
INSULATED COOLER BAG	24 HOURS
REFRIGERATOR	72 HOURS
FREEZER	3 - 6 MONTHS
DEEP FREEZER	6 - 12 MONTHS

Narra Nest

Download Your Free Printable
Breast Milk Storage Guidelines

What does pumped milk look like?

It is normal for the fats in expressed breastmilk to separate in a container. When preparing a bottle for baby, simply swirl (don't shake!) the milk to reincorporate. (If a bottle is shaken, the enzymes will break down. More on those in a moment.)



Credit: Wikipedia Commons



Credit: Flickr user Shellie Johnson

A tip on freezing storage bags, lay the bag flat in your freezer as it's more compact and easier to transport. You may even repurpose a wipe container (they're the perfect size!) to lay the bags flat and keep everything organized.

A Note About Milk Freshness & Lipase

Some mamas may be concerned about the freshness of their milk. If you follow storage guidelines, your milk should be perfectly safe for you and your baby. Soured human milk will have a very distinct odor, much like bad cow's milk. If you have concerns about the freshness of your expressed milk, dispose of it. Following best practices for expressed milk will prevent spoilage.

Some mothers notice their milk has a soapy smell and taste, even if properly collected and stored. The "speculation is that these mothers have an excess of the enzyme lipase in their milk, which begins to break down the milk fat soon after the milk is expressed." If you think excess lipase in your milk may be an issue, you can [find more information on KellyMom.com](#).

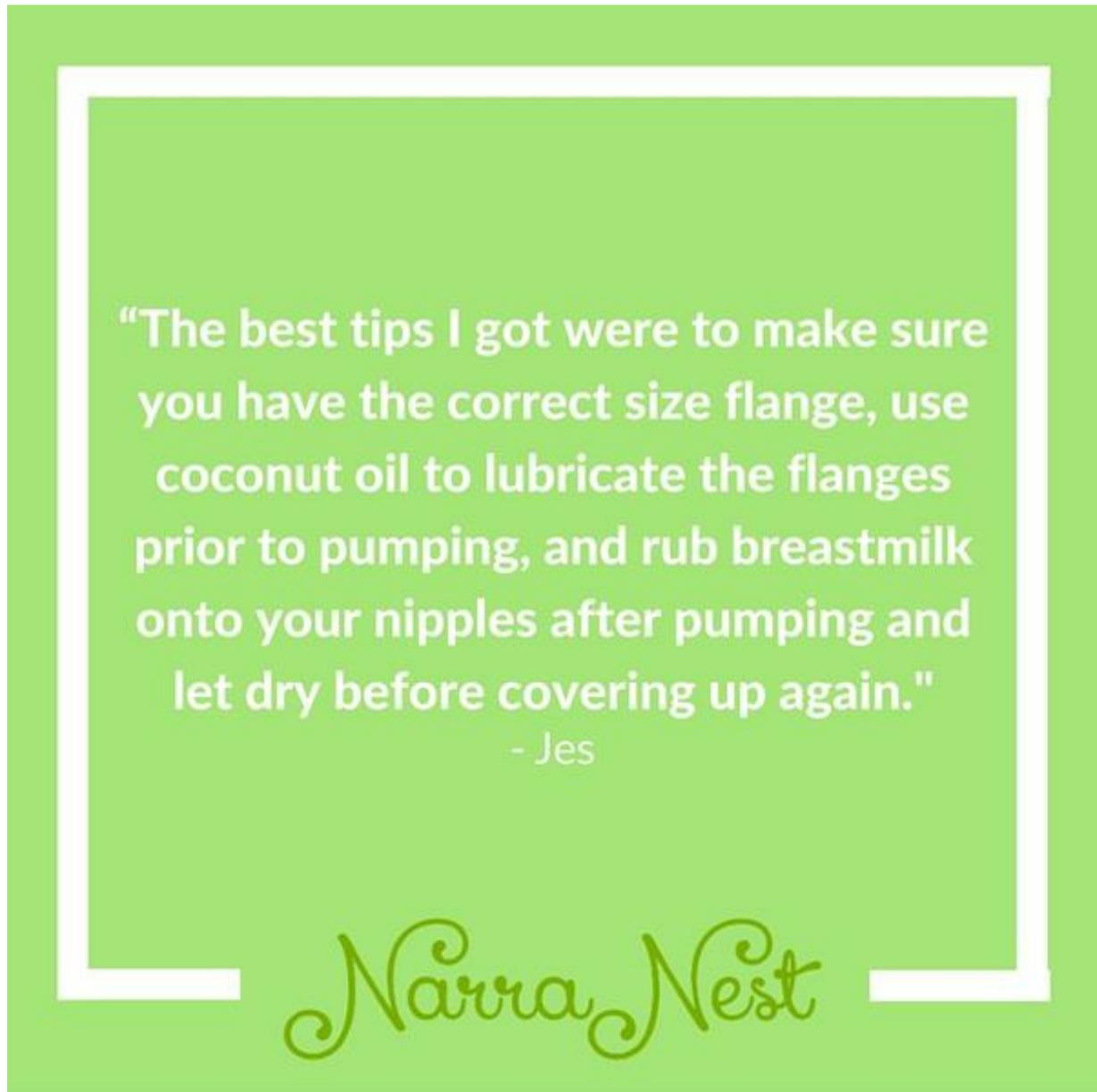
Pumping Routines

Remember your personal goal for pumping you identified at the beginning? When setting up a pumping routine, the most important thing to consider is your goal, and how often you will need to express milk to meet that goal. Following a set pumping schedule can be very helpful in maintaining your needed supply, but strict schedules don't always make sense for mamas with little ones. If you are a stay-at-home mom who nurses on demand, a strict schedule may not give you the flexibility to respond to your baby's cues. Maybe a loose routine will be more

appropriate. If you're a mama that works outside-of-the-home with a varying work schedule, you'll need to figure out a system that works with that fluctuation. That's why I find it helpful to think about these plans as pumping "routines" instead of "schedules."

Remember - routines are not set in stone, and a million different things will come along to change your baby's routine from day to day - growth spurts, teething, ear infections, travelling, etc. Remain flexible. If it's not working, change it. Be gentle with yourself. This is not about perfection, it's about making things work for you and your family.

So let's set up a routine that will work for you!



Boosting Supply

When pumping to boost supply, it's important to remember the supply and demand concept. The more often your breasts are emptied, the more often they'll fill back up, and the more milk you'll produce. So the goal in this situation is to empty the breast of milk as often as possible. This is why moms are often advised to nurse "on demand" instead of on a schedule. When you nurse on demand, your baby is in charge of how much and how often they eat. This makes a lot of sense when you consider that babies don't always grow at an even pace. Some days they might be hungrier than others, or simply want to nurse more for comfort. That's ok! In fact, nursing often and on demand is

one of the most effective way to build your supply! If you're nursing on demand, you may want to consider writing out a loose routine that gives you the flexibility to respond to your baby's cues.

If baby is doing a good job of emptying your breasts, then you will probably just need to add pumping sessions to your nursing routine. If baby isn't emptying your breasts efficiently, it might be more effective for you to try pumping immediately after each nursing session to ensure your breasts are emptied fully. In any case, it's a good idea to make sure your breasts are fully emptied at least every 3 hours.

Sample Routine:

Baby is not latching well yet, and mama is using a nipple shield. Mama doesn't feel that her breasts are being fully emptied when baby nurses, so she chooses to pump after most feeds (about every 3 hours, depending on how often baby nurses that day) and once during baby's 6 hour stretch of sleep. This is a tough routine, but it's only short term. As her supply improves and baby begins to latch better (hopefully with the help of a breastfeeding professional!), she is able to pump less and less. This mama's routine varies quite a bit from day to day, and she allows for that flexibility. Here's her plan:

7:20am: Nurse, then pump

10:00am: Nurse, then pump

11:15am: Nurse

1:10pm: Nurse, then pump

4:00pm: Nurse then pump

5:30pm: Nurse

7:20pm: Nurse, then pump

8:00pm - 10:00pm: Baby cluster feeds on and off

10:00pm: Nurse, then pump

1:00am: Pump while baby sleeps

4:05am: Nurse then pump

You can also try a "Power Pumping" schedule to boost your supply. Power pumping is defined nicely by La Leche League, "increase the frequency of pumping times by shortening the interval between pumping times instead of increasing the duration of pumping (e.g., pump three times for 15-20 minutes versus two times for 30 minutes if you're away 8-10 hours). This way you're pumping about the same number of total minutes, but you're stimulating your breasts more frequently, which triggers milk production." This mimics cluster feeding and the increased stimulation should increase milk supply.

Pumping to Bottle Feed

If you are pumping to exclusively bottle feed your baby with breast milk, you'll want to set up a routine that mimics baby's supply and demand process as closely as possible. Of course, many pumping mamas are also working full or part-time and that will certainly impact your routine. Keep in mind that a 'perfect routine' is one that works for you and your lifestyle!

Sample Schedule:

Baby is twelve weeks old a nursing well, and mama's supply is good. It's time for her to head back to work full-time. She hopes to pump enough to supply baby with breast milk while he's at daycare 8 hours per day and nurse in the evenings and on the weekend. She's never responded well to pumping, and is a bit concerned that she won't be able to keep up. Baby eats about 10 times per day, about 3 oz per feed. Mama expects baby to need about 3 - 4 feeds each day at daycare, so she'll want to pump about 12 oz per day to keep up. She plans her routine as follows:

6:00am: Pump while baby sleeps (3 oz)

7:00am: Nurse when baby wakes up

8:45am: Nurse when dropping off baby at daycare

10:00am: Pump at work (2 oz)

12:30pm: Pump at work (2 oz)

3:00pm: Pump at work (2 oz)

5:15pm: Nurse

7:30pm: Nurse

9:30pm: Nurse

10:30pm: Pump before bed (3 oz)

11:00pm - 6:00am: Mama and baby cosleep and baby nurses a few times throughout the night

Occasional Pumping

Some mamas may pump to have a bottle or two on hand for the babysitter, or get a bit of a stash started for an upcoming vacation they're planning. Perhaps they pump to donate extra milk to a local milk bank, or so that dad can give baby a bedtime bottle. Occasional pumping is very common and often easier to fit into our daily routine. Many mamas find that pumping during baby's longest stretch of sleep works the best (our supply is often highest late at night and in early morning). Of course, this will depend on your baby's sleep habits. You might find it's most convenient to fit a pumping session in during naptime, or right before you go to bed at night. For occasional pumping, following a set schedule will be less crucial - just find a time when you can relax for a few moments on a regular basis and go from there!

Sample Schedule:

Baby is six months old and nursing is well established. Mama would like to leave baby with his grandparents to enjoy a date night with her partner from time to time, so she plans to build up a small stash of milk.

7:00am: Nurse when baby wakes up

10:00am: Nurse

1:00pm: Nurse

2:00pm: Pump while baby naps

4:00pm: Nurse

7:00pm: Nurse

9:30pm: Nurse

10:30pm: Pump before bed

Building a Stash

It's important to consider how much milk baby will actually need need while you're away, and how much you typically pump per session. So how much will baby need? KellyMom.com suggests that babies between one and six months will usually drink 19 - 30 oz (570 - 900 mL) per day. Use this figure as estimate and divide by the number of times your baby usually eats to get an idea of how much he'll need per feeding. KellyMom.com provides [a handy calculator to help you estimate your goal amount](#) for yourself.

"I struggled with the idea that because I pumped small amounts (3 or 4 oz total) that my son wasn't getting enough milk when he nursed, but that isn't the case. Take your time when pumping, don't feel rushed."

- Silver

Narra Nest

It's understandable to be concerned about the amount of milk you will be able to store for your baby in your absence! Having a healthy, realistic perspective can set a mother's mind at ease. You don't need a freezer full of breastmilk to leave your baby for the day. You simply need enough. Be kind to yourself, you're doing a wonderful job!

Caring For Your Pump

Use the directions provided in your individual pump to maintain it for optimal use. But these tips from my experience will be useful, regardless of your pump style!

- Keep your pump in the same place. With little ones underfoot, it's so easy for things to get misplaced! By keeping your pump and accessories in a consistent location, you'll make getting and going with your pump easier for yourself. (Maybe a fun storage tote, atop the fridge or on the counter?)
- Wash and prepare your pump for reuse at the end of each day. For less of a hassle in the morning, it's a good idea to prepare your pump for reuse before heading to bed.
- Regularly inspect your pump. Just as you regularly maintain your car, it's important to treat your breast pump as a piece of useful equipment! Even small pieces like the membranes or valves, which create suction, will make a difference in the amount of milk you're able to collect. Give your pump the once over every so often to make sure you're getting optimal use.
- Safely replace old or broken pump parts. What if part of your pump needs replacing? Is it safe to buy or share used pump parts? Many moms want to use a handmedown part or buy used, rather than purchase a brand new part from the manufacturer. Should you? That question can be answered by knowing whether or not your pump is an open system or closed system.
 - A closed system "has a barrier between the milk collection kit and the pump mechanism to prevent contamination." (Most Spectra and many Hygeia pump models, for example. [See a full list at KellyMom.com.](#)) However, many closed system pumps are intended to be single-user pumps; check the manufacturer's warranty and motor life guarantees.
 - An open system, by contrast, does not have any sort of mechanism to prevent contamination. (Most Medela pumps, for example.)

Protecting the health of your baby by practicing good breast pump hygiene is paramount. When considering whether or not to use used pump parts, weigh the benefits and risks. Full disclosure should be given, and the used pump in question thoroughly researched, so moms can make an informed decision.

Galactagogues

A 'galactagogue' is a food or drug which increases milk flow. They are particularly helpful for mothers who are experiencing low supply, or who want to maintain supply while pumping.

"I choose a comfy chair in a quiet place to pump. I use this time to prepare for the day. I often read the Bible, or just close my eyes and reflect."

- Toni

Narra Nest

- **Hydration**

Staying hydrated is a great example of how general self-care and wellness practices go a long way! Moms who are underhydrated or dehydrated will often find their milk supply decreases, but will notice an increase upon further hydration.

- **Oatmeal**

Though not scientifically confirmed, many mothers anecdotally find oatmeal helps increase their lactation.

- **Blessed thistle**

An herb usually taken for digestive problems (either in vitamin pill or tea form), it has also been commonly used to increase milk flow.

- **Fenugreek**

Similar, but not identical, in function to blessed thistle.

- **Lactation Teas**

[Mother's Milk](#) is a popular tea among lactating moms. A combination of galactagogue herbs in a soothing beverage is just the right touch!

- **Prescription medications**

In some cases, a care provider may prescribe medication to increase milk supply. Domperidone or Reglan are common ones. With further conversation, and weighing of benefits and risks, a prescription may be an ideal care plan for some mothers.

Talk to your doctor, midwife, or lactation consultant before attempting any of these treatments!

Pumping at Work or While Traveling

Breast pumps are wonderful tools to help mothers continue breastfeeding while being away from their babies. Many women pump when meeting the demands of work or travel.

These tips should make pumping at work or traveling easier.

- **Ease into the transition of being away from your baby.**

It's a great idea to do several, mini 'test runs' of being away from your nursing baby before your usual schedule resumes.

- **Take care of yourself!**

Stress can impact your supply. Taking time for self care is an important part of taking care of your baby.

- **Plan your day around pumping breaks.**

Remember, pumping on a schedule is important!

- **Prepare to store breastmilk (either chilled or frozen) for prolonged periods of time.**

Occasionally a horror story makes the news of a mom being made to dump her supply of breastmilk at the airline counter. Hopefully, knowing the airline's regulations ahead of time might help you prevent these unfortunate situations.

- **Know your rights.**

More Resources for Pumping at Work or while Travelling:

- [Business Travel: Make It Work for You and Your Baby](#)
- [Working & Pumping Tips](#)
- [Traveling with Breast Milk](#)
- [Working and Breastfeeding](#)

- [How Can I Make My Return To Work Easier?](#)

Weaning Off Your Pump

Weaning off the pump will look different for each mother. Especially for mothers who have been exclusively pumping, ending their pumping relationship will mirror a mother who gently weans her nursing from the breast. Rapid changes really rock the boat, for everyone.



That said, here are a few tips for weaning off the pump:

- Drop one pumping session at a time, a new one every five to seven days.
- Gradually decrease the time of each pumping session, and increase the time between sessions.
- Replace the dropped pumping session with something meaningful, like a cuddle with your child or an act of self care.

- Monitor engorgement. By being gentle with the weaning process, you should prevent any engorgement issues. If you do become engorged, simply express milk to comfort. Talk with a lactation counselor with additional concerns.
- Remember to take things slowly, and be proud of your accomplishments!

Resources for the Breastfeeding Mom

Finding good support and help is a huge contributor to breastfeeding success. Some of my favorite go-to resources for my breastfeeding journey have been:

Footnotes:

[Myths of Breastfeeding](#), International Breastfeeding Centre
[18 Breast Pumping Tips](#), Ask Dr. Sears
[Now on iTunes: An audio galactagogue](#), Breastfeeding Medicine
[Choosing a breastpump](#), LLL
[How to buy a breast pump, important safety notes](#), BabyCenter.com
[Breast Pumps and Insurance Coverage](#), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
[Breast Compression](#), International Breastfeeding Centre
[Getting More Milk When Pumping](#), La Leche League International
[Hand Expression](#), BreastfeedingUSA.org
[Maximizing Milk Production with Hands On Pumping](#). Stanford Medicine
[Hand expressing your breastmilk](#), KellyMom.com
[I'm not pumping enough milk. What can I do?](#), KellyMom.com
[What are the LLLI guidelines for storing my pumped milk?](#), La Leche League International
[Breastmilk Storage & Handling](#), KellyMom.com
[My expressed breastmilk doesn't smell fresh. What can I do?](#), KellyMom.com
[Not Enough Milk? How to Increase Supply when you are Exclusively Pumping](#), ExclusivePumping.com
[How much expressed milk will my baby need?](#), KellyMom.com
[What should I know about buying a new or used breastpump?](#), KellyMom.com
[Are Used Breast Pumps a Good Option? Issues to Consider](#), La Leche League International
[What is a galactagogue? Do I need one?](#), KellyMom.com
[Blessed Thistle Information Overview](#), WebMD
[Fenugreek Information Overview](#), WebMD
[How Can I Make My Return To Work Easier?](#), La Leche League International
[Traveling with Breastmilk](#), Breastfeeding Today
[Weaning from the pump](#), KellyMom.com
[Weaning from the Pump](#), La Leche League International