

PUMPING 101

The Ultimate Guide for Pumping Moms

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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR PUMPING MOMS

Hey, Mama!

Before you dig in, I just want to tell you: You are already an amazing mom. Seriously. No matter how much you pump or don't pump and no matter how long your pumping journey lasts. The amazing support and encouragement I felt from fellow moms is one of the biggest reasons the

 **Sarah Wells Bags** brand exists. Every single detail — from the thermally lined pockets to store your breastmilk to padded laptop sleeves — was designed with input from moms like you. It's why your input means so much to us, and it's why we created this guide that's filled with tips to make your pumping journey easier, no matter where you are in your pumping journey. Whether you're preparing to pump for the first time or you're weeks or months into your pumping goal, we all have one thing in common: as mamas, we're part of one of the best, fiercest, most supportive girl gangs in the world.

PUMP ON, MAMA!

Sarah Wells

In this guide, you'll find:

- ▶ Tips for getting a free breast pump through insurance
- ▶ Different types of breast pumps
- ▶ The first days of pumping FAQ
- ▶ Pumping registry essentials
- ▶ Plus, tips to prepare your partner

How to Get Your Breast Pump Covered by Insurance

I get it, mama. Trying to understand and navigate your insurance coverage makes you want to toss your laptop, turn on *Real Housewives* and consume an entire box of Thin Mints (can I get an Amen?). So I'm breaking it down step by step and making it super simple to help you get a FREE breast pump through your insurance company. **Here's what you need to know:**

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Under the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies must cover lactation support and breastfeeding equipment and supplies, unless you have a grandfathered plan (a.k.a., a plan created or purchased before March 23, 2010).

Now here's the BUT...

BUT, the challenge is, every insurance company interprets this in their own way:

- ▶ Some only cover specific brands (for example, it may cover Medela, Aveda and Hygeia, but not Spectra or Freemie) or specific models (for example, they may cover the Medela Pump in Style, but not the Medela Freestyle)
- ▶ Some may only cover breast pump rentals
- ▶ Some allow you to request reimbursement after you purchase one
- ▶ Some require a prescription from your doctor

The Bottom Line

There's no need to overcomplicate this. Before you waste precious time researching this to death, go straight to the source.

01 STEP ONE: Call a durable medical equipment supplier like Acelleron and they'll handle it for you for free.

Yes, really! They'll work directly with your insurance company to find out what you qualify for and get your pump shipped pronto. Another alternative is to call the number on the back of your insurance card. Tell them you're expecting or recently gave birth, and you'd like them to explain how breast pump coverage works through them. Here are some questions to ask while you have them on the phone:

- ▶ What type of pump can I get (hospital-grade, manual, double electric)?
- ▶ How long will it take to arrive?
- ▶ Does insurance cover spare pump parts and any accessories?
- ▶ Can I purchase a pump out-of-network (meaning any pump you want, at say, Target) and submit the receipt for reimbursement? Will I be reimbursed the full amount?
- ▶ Where should I buy my breast pump? Do I need to purchase it through a specific site or provider?
- ▶ Do I need a prescription?

Take notes, and write down specific brands or model types they mention so you can research them and check out reviews.

02 STEP TWO: Do your research to make sure you choose the right pump for you.

Ask your doctor or a lactation consultant for guidance, and check customer reviews online to see what other pumping mamas are saying (pssst, we break down the different types on the next page).

Important Note: Accessories such as spare parts and breast pump bags may not be covered by your insurance, but you can use an FSA or HSA to pay for breast pump supplies and accessories including a Sarah Wells Breast Pump bag and accessories, if you go through a company like Acelleron.

Different Types of Breast Pumps

When it comes to breast pump shopping one thing's for sure: **One size does not fit all.** If you're shopping for a breast pump for the first time, it can feel a tad overwhelming when you see how many options are out there. First, it helps to understand the main kinds of breast pumps and how they work.

When you're considering what kind of pump you need, it's important to consider your lifestyle and your breastfeeding plan. Will you be exclusively pumping or pumping at work? Do you travel frequently? Are you in the car a lot? Will you be nursing on-demand 24/7 and just pumping on the rare occasion you're away from your little pumping?

Understanding how often and where you'll be pumping can play a major factor in what type of pump to buy.

▼ The Claire Breast Pump Bag



Claire in Black [View Online >](#)

Here, we've broken down the main types of breast pumps and included pros and cons, so you can get a better feel for which is best for you.

01 Manual Pump

No external power source means this pump is solely reliant on you. Once you assemble it and attach a bottle to it, you pump manually by controlling the handle yourself.

- PROS**
- ▶ They're fairly inexpensive compared to an electric or battery-powered pump.
 - ▶ They're small, light and portable. Because you don't need an outlet to pump, they can be real lifesavers when traveling, if your other pump breaks, or if you just need a quick pump to get some fast relief.
 - ▶ They're super quiet.
 - ▶ They're pretty easy to use.
- CONS**
- ▶ It takes longer to pump. For starters, manual pumps are typically single (meaning you can only pump on one side at a time). Second, because it's dependent on how quickly you manually squeeze and for how long, it's simply not as efficient.
 - ▶ You may not get as much milk per pumping session. You'll probably get tired sooner, which means you may not pump until you're 100% empty.
 - ▶ You can't multitask while you pump.
 - ▶ Holy hand cramp, Batman!

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you plan to exclusively pump or pump several times a day at work, a manual pump is probably not the best choice for your primary pump. However, it can be a lifesaver on road trips, the middle of the night, while traveling, or when you don't want to bring your electric pump out with you.

Note: If you'll be pumping daily, most lactation consultants recommend that you purchase a "hospital strength" pump (not to be confused with hospital grade). This means 250 mmHg or higher.

Different Types of Breast Pumps

...continued

02 Electric Pump (Double or Single)

Electric pumps are fully automatic (aka, plug 'em in and turn 'em on), with adjustable suction and speed levels. While most electric pumps are double (meaning you can pump both sides at the same time) there are single models available too.

Once you start researching pumps, you'll see that you can choose between an Open or Closed System. Here's a breakdown of what that means. A closed system breast pump has a barrier (usually a filter) between the milk collection kit and the pump mechanism, while an open system does not have a barrier. This means that in an open pump system, there's a greater risk of bacteria and mold finding their way into your pump.

- PROS**
- ▶ Efficiency. Because you're ideally pumping on both sides at once and it's not reliant on how fast or hard you're manually pumping, you'll typically empty your breasts faster than with a manual pump.
 - ▶ You may pump more milk, especially as you figure out which setting is right for you.
 - ▶ If you invest in a hands-free pumping bra, you can multitask away while you pump.
 - ▶ Many come with backup battery packs, so you can pump without access to an outlet.
- CONS**
- ▶ They can be loud.
 - ▶ They can be heavy and bulky.
 - ▶ They're more expensive.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you plan to exclusively pump, pump several times a day, or pump at work, then, mama, a double electric pump might just be your new best friend. There are tons of different brands and models, but we'd urge you to check out Amazon reviews, join some Facebook groups (like my **Sarah Wells VIPs - Very Important Pumpers**), ask the lactation consultant at the hospital you'll be delivering at, and ask any friends you know who have pumped.

03 Hospital-Grade Pump

The mother of all breast pumps, hospital-grade pumps are heavy-duty pumps with powerful motors and more "sucks" per minute.

- PROS**
- ▶ If you're struggling with supply or pumping for twins or a preemie, renting a hospital-grade pump may be the answer to maintaining or increasing your supply
- CONS**
- ▶ It's expensive. Because they're typically \$1,000 or more to purchase, you'll likely need to rent one from your local hospital. Whether you're renting it on a monthly basis or buying one outright, it's going to cost you much more than buying an electric pump.
 - ▶ They're bulky and heavy
 - ▶ If you rent it, you have to go through the hassle of returning it.

04 Small, Portable, Battery-Powered Pump

While many electric breast pumps come with backup battery packs so you can pump on the go, there's a new wave of more portable, lightweight and discreet breast pumps on the market today. Many of these are completely chord-free, so you can literally walk around wearing them without anyone really noticing that you're even pumping. Some of these include the Freemie, Baby Buddha, Spectra 9 Plus, and Willow.

We recommend doing your research to find out if one of these may fit your needs. Fair warning: These can be more expensive than even your standard double electric pump, and because they're typically smaller, they may only hold a certain amount of expressed milk at one time. That means that if you're a lucky mama who pumps more than 5-6 ounces per sitting, some of these may not be the most practical for you. As with everything, read the fine print, read reviews and ask around.



The Lizzy Bag [View Online >](#)

Cold Gold [View Online >](#)





01 The Lizzy Bag [View Online >](#)

02 Pumparoo [View Online >](#)


NOT PICTURED

Matching Cold Gold [View Online >](#)

Pumping Registry Essentials

Registering for clothes, mobiles and crib bedding is oh so fun. Registering for pumping and breastfeeding essentials? Meh, not so glamorous, amiright?

Alot of first-time moms skip these essential items, but we urge you to make them a priority if you plan to breastfeed—and because pumping will likely be a huge part of your life, you'll want to make sure you have everything you need to make the job easier from Day One.

- Extra set of pump parts and membranes/duckbills
- Hands-free pumping bra
- Cooler with ice packs
- Wet/Dry Bag
- Breast/nursing pads *(for leaks, trust us)*
- Lanolin cream
- Nursing cover
- Milk storage bags
- Bottles
- Bottle brush
- Sarah Wells Breast Pump Bag** 
(this can double as your diaper bag!)
- Breast pump cleaning wipes
- Electric toothbrush or a small massager
(for the dreaded clogged milk duct)

The First Days of Pumping: FAQ

As your due date approaches, you're likely making final preparations for what to bring to the hospital and how to prepare for those first few days and weeks.

We know that if it's your first time breastfeeding—or even your second or third time—it can feel confusing knowing exactly what to do and when to do it.

We consulted with Jenn Foster, a Senior Lactation Consultant with Spectra Baby U.S.A., to get her top tips and recommendations for the first few days of pumping and nursing.

01 Should I bring my breast pump to the hospital?

It depends. If you plan to exclusively pump from the beginning, then yes. If you're going to try nursing, maybe. Even if you only plan to nurse while at the hospital, you may want to bring your pump so that A) the lactation consultant can show you how to use it or B) In the event that your baby is in the NICU or has trouble latching, you have your pump ready to go.

02 How soon after the baby is born should I pump?

For those who plan to exclusively pump, you should pump as soon as possible to establish and maintain your supply. "It's still very important for you to do a lot of skin to skin with baby," says Jenn. "It allows for self-regulation of the baby's blood sugar and body temperature and allows for the natural lactation hormones to be properly stimulated."

In addition, she says not to be discouraged if you're pumping and not getting any milk at first. "Pumping colostrum can be tricky due to the thickness of the milk," she explains. "Try breast massage or hand expression if you're having this common issue."

Jenn recommends pumping 10-12 times per 24-hour period.

If you plan to nurse, most lactation consultants recommend holding off on pumping until your baby is 4 weeks old. "This allows your milk supply to be established really well and it gives the baby time to get a good "groove" at the breast," says Jenn.

If you find that you're struggling with supply in the early days, your consultant may recommend that you pump after 1-2 feedings to increase the demand for more milk.

"Introducing pumping can be best after the morning nursing session," she recommends. "This is when the lactation hormones are the highest. Even pumping 5-7 minutes after the nursing session can be helpful to start!"

03 How many minutes should each pumping session last?

"Pumping time should be around 15-20 minutes to allow for the lactation hormones to peak properly," says Jenn. Of course every woman is different, but the general rule is to pump until no more milk is coming out.

04 What's the "normal" amount of milk I should get per pumping session?

According to Jenn and the team at Spectra, 2 oz. combined sides is "normal" output. But again, there's really no such thing as normal. If you're concerned about your supply, contact a lactation consultant at your local hospital or find support via an organization like La Leche League.



Tips to Prepare Your Partner for the Journey Ahead

We hear it over and over again from pumping mamas about their partners:

“They think pumping is like taking a break”

“They tell me I should just switch to formula.”

“They get annoyed that when I have to pump, they have to take care of the baby.”

“They don’t understand why I can’t just skip a pump.”

“They. just. don’t. understand.”

The truth is, we ourselves don’t understand until we are actually living it. Before the baby’s born, we know that by choosing to breastfeed, we are the baby’s food source. But until we’re actually living it, we don’t fully realize the commitment and the toll it can take on us physically, emotionally and mentally.

To help you prepare your partner to support you as best they can while you nurse and/or pump, here are some tips:



01 Mentally Prepare Them Now

You’re probably having conversations about what kind of parenting style you want to adopt, what your nursery theme should be, names, etc.

While you’re at it, have a conversation about the realities of breastfeeding. Explain why breastfeeding and pumping is important to you. Send some articles their way, if they seem doubtful.

02 Make it a Partnership

You may be the only one with milk-filled breasts, but you’re both equally responsible for keeping your baby fed, healthy, and happy. Let them know you’ll be pumping every 2-3 hours around the clock. Your job is to pump, so your little one can eat. Their job is to help make that happen any way they can, whether it’s feeding, changing, or entertaining the baby or older kids while you pump or rest.

They can also assist by helping pack your breast pump bag, cleaning pump parts and managing the liquid gold.



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