

# Pumping Breastmilk

## How often and how long do I need to pump?

How many times a day you pump and for how long depends on your specific situation and your goals. The suggestions below are for building or maintaining a full supply of breastmilk, which is 25 to 30oz per day by the time your baby is 4 to 6 weeks old (see chart). However, always remember ANY amount of breastmilk benefits your baby.

### Volume goals for one baby (double for twins)

Time	Milliliters (ml)	Ounces (oz)
Day 7	300-500 ml	10-16 oz
Day 10 to 14	500-750 ml	16-25 oz
Week 4 and beyond	750-900 ml	25-30 oz

### To build a full milk supply after your baby is born if your baby cannot breastfeed, isn't yet breastfeeding well, or if you are trying to increase supply

The first 2 weeks are crucial to building a good milk supply. It is during this time that your body is learning exactly how much milk your baby needs. Your body learns this every time your baby breastfeeds, or every time you pump. For example, if you nurse or pump only 2 times per day, your body learns that your baby only needs to eat twice per day. Your body is smart and will adjust to making only that much milk. That is why newborn babies nurse 8-12 times per day – they are telling your body to go from making drops of milk (all they need in the first days) to bigger volumes every day until you reach a full supply of 25-30 oz. by the time they are 4 weeks. Frequent pumping is important and should match the feeding schedule of a newborn baby.

- If your baby cannot breastfeed, pumping should be started as soon as possible after birth, ideally within the first hour. Colostrum often comes out very easily using your hands in the first hour after birth.
- Pump both breasts at the same time, using massage and hand expression a minimum of 8 times a day. This works out to every 3 hours, but it is OK to pump more often if needed or if you have missed the 3-hour mark.
- During the first 2 weeks it is very important to pump in the night, ideally every 2 to 3 hours. Try your hardest not to go longer than 5 hours. After 5 hours, your milk making hormones drop and your body has to work extra hard to increase them again.
- If your baby is also breastfeeding, but you need to pump to maintain or increase supply, pump right after baby feeds.
- Generally, we recommend you pump, using hands on pumping, about 15 minutes with a hospital grade breast pump (Symphony).
- They Symphony pump has 2 programs
  - The Initiate Program is what you want to use if you have just given birth to about 6 days after birth, or until you are making 20 ml (combining milk from both breasts) for 3 sessions in a row. This program will run

from 15-17 minutes, has a random pumping patter, and will have pauses. Wait to stop until you hear a beep.

- The Maintain Program is what we want you to use when your baby is 6 days old, or when you are making 20ml per pumping session often. This setting will run for 30 min and then stop, but you don't need to pump for more than about 15 minutes.
- The Symphony pump has instructions on it, and your lactation consultant will show you how to use the proper setting.
- If you are using Maintain and have no more milk coming at 15 minutes, press the droplet button and let the pump run for 2 more minutes.
- If you are using Maintain and still have milk coming at 15 minutes and you feel your breasts are not quite emptied, it is OK to pump 5-10 more minutes. You may want to pump one breast at a time for 5 minutes each using gentle massage. Breasts don't ever "fully empty" so your breasts may still feel like they have milk in them, especially in the early days.
- For the first few days after birth, milk volumes will be low. This milk is called colostrum and is a thick, clear or golden fluid full of antibodies and protein. This milk is very important and is like medicine or a vaccine for your baby. Small volumes, even drops, can be stored in syringes provided by your nurse. Even if your baby can't eat, usually your baby's nurse can put your colostrum on your baby's lips or inner cheeks.
- Volume will start increasing as your actual milk "comes in." By the time your baby is 2 weeks old, ideally you will be making 16 to 25 ounces of milk a day (8 to 12 breastmilk containers per day)!
- By the time your baby is 4 weeks old, ideally you will be making 25-30 ounces per day.
- Engorgement is common as the milk "comes in." However, there are ways to be more comfortable during this phase. Talk to your nurse or lactation specialist if you are uncomfortable.

### To Learn More

- Lactation Services  
206-987-1420
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

## Breast Pumping Log

DATE	12 MID	1 AM	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 NOON	1 PM	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total # of times pumped today	Total amount pumped	

Adapted from UWMC Lactation Services with permission