

Information for breastfeeding families

Selecting a Breast Pump



It is hard to make a decision about which one will be effective and comfortable for you! The basic parts of a breast pump will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. But these are typical.



Flange goes over the breast



Connector



Tubing for electric pump



Bottle

Breast pumps can remove milk from one breast at a time or both breasts simultaneously. Pumping both sides at once cuts the time in half and stimulates the hormones of lactation better.

Pumps fall into 4 basic categories:

- Hospital grade - Generally rental pumps used while establishing a milk supply if your infant is premature or ill
- Personal use pumps - Generally used by employed mothers at work
- Battery or small electric pumps - Sometimes used by employed mothers or for occasional use
- Manually operated breast pumps - Best used for occasional use

Adjustable suction and cycle frequency: You want your pump to mimic the typical suction patterns of a baby at the breast. Therefore the suction range should be adjustable up to about 240 mm Hg and cycle about 48-50 times per minute. Breast pump packages are not labeled with this information at this time.

Portability: Where will you use your pump? Will there be times you will need to quickly put it in your purse or wear it as a backpack? Or will you always be sitting in a designated pumping room?

Versatile power source: It is useful that an electric pump can be plugged in and also could be operated on batteries at other times. In the case of a power outage, you should be able to operate it manually.

Safety: If it is operated by electricity, the pump should be rated by the Underwriters Laboratory as safe. Check to assure it will automatically cut off at suction levels above 240 mm Hg which could damage the breast tissue.

Ease of cleaning: Check the small parts. Is it likely that small, but essential, parts could slip down the sink and be lost? Is the pump easy to reassemble? The pump should be washed with soap and water after each use.

Resources

FDA Breast Pump Website – Basic information on breast pumps

<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/ConsumerProducts/BreastPumps/default.htm>

Breast Pump Comparisons – User reviews of various breast pumps

<http://www.breastpumpcomparisons.com/category/first-years-breast-pump-reviews>