

How to Choose a Breast Pump

If you're a breastfeeding mom, there may be times when you need to be away from your baby. But you still want your little one to get all the health benefits of your breast milk. That's where a breast pump comes in handy.

A breast pump lets you store your milk to feed your baby later. Pumping also signals your body to keep making milk to help maintain your supply. Just as with breastfeeding, pumping takes some getting used to—especially if you are pumping at work. It's important to find the right breast pump for you.

There are three basic types of breast pumps. Manual, Battery-powered and Electric pumps. A breast pump is typically held in place by hand or by a nursing bra, a breast pumping bra, or a band. When using a manual pump, squeeze a handle or lever to create suction and express milk from your breast. Your milk is then collected in an attached container. A battery-powered or electric breast pump uses batteries, or a cord plugged into an electrical outlet to power a small, motorized pump. That pump creates suction to squeeze milk from the breasts.

Do your research before buying a breast pump. Breast pumps can be expensive. To save money consider renting a pump. Your hospital or lactation consultant may have rentals, or they can refer you to the nearest rental location. In addition, many insurances now cover breast pumps, so be sure to ask your midwife or doctor about this before you give birth so you can be prepared.

You also need to ensure the flanges of your breast pump fit properly to avoid any nipple damage and maximize milk removal. Be sure to read the instructions to ensure a proper fit or have a lactation consultant check your flange fit.

Pumping is a big commitment, but it can be done with a little bit of time management, as well as planning ahead with your set-up at work if you need to express milk there. It's important to choose the right breast pump for you. Follow the directions for safe pumping to ensure your baby gets all the nutrients she needs to grow and be healthy.