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“Power-Pumping” – Super Stimulation For Milk Production

Your milk production is lagging behind your expectations? You want to or must quickly increase your milk production?

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Perhaps your baby cannot (yet) suck effectively enough or is too weak to adequately empty the breast. Perhaps you are separated from your baby because your baby is ill or premature or you must return to your job soon. Possibly, you might need to produce milk for twins or more. Perhaps you have, up until now, lacked the necessary competent support and counselling so the baby’s sucking problem has been overlooked. Possibly, there has been no adequate information available for you. Moreover, many breastfeeding mothers who are pumping observe that their milk production declines at around 6 weeks or in particular stressful situations. “Power pumping” is intended to be supplementary stimulation of the breast when the baby’s sucking or other pumping phases with the milk pump cannot sufficiently increase or maintain the milk production.

The natural sucking behavior of a healthy, active newborn ensures that the mother’s milk production is stimulated optimally. Over the course of the day (frequently in the evening), most newborns or older babies who need to stimulate their mothers’ milk production have phases of short frequent breastfeeds only interrupted by brief pauses. “Power pumping” imitates the baby’s so-called “cluster feeding phases”. (If you are dependent on the pump or your baby cannot adequately empty the breast). With “cluster feeding” or “power pumping” the pumping pauses are brief and prevent the prolactin levels (prolactin = milk producing hormone) from falling back to its basis level. Instead, higher production of prolactin occurs. This has a positive effect on milk production. Furthermore, the milk produced in the brief pauses in pumping is collected straightway and makes space for further milk production.

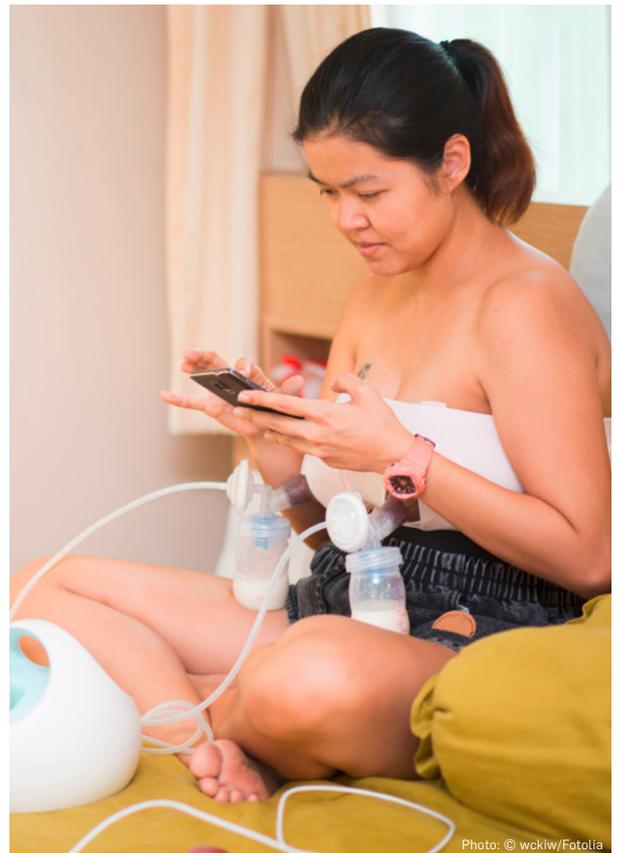


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Normal pumping of mother’s milk and “power pumping”:

In the first 7-10 days (in the time during which milk is being built up) a mother who is dependent on the milk pump should pump 8-12 times in 24 hours to maintain the milk production. After this period at least 5x or, better, 6-8 times daily. If the baby is able to suckle directly on the breast – at least partially – then, depending on the baby’s ability, this can result in fewer pumping phases.

Some of these pumping sessions could be replaced or supplemented by “power pumping”. Please select those methods which can be best carried out. Adaptations are possible and desirable. The important thing is the frequent pumping phases and the brief pauses in between.

Pumping phases and pauses with a double pump set	Power Pumping ca. 6 × daily	Power Pumping 2 × daily	Power Pumping 1 × daily	Power Pumping 1 × daily
Pump	5 min	10 min	20 min	15 min
Pause	5 min	10 min	10 min	10 min
Pump	5 min	10 min	10 min	15 min
Pause	5 min	10 min	10 min	10 min
Pump	5 min	10 min	10 min	15 min

Practical Tips for “Power Pumping”:

- › Use an effective pump with a double pump set. You can also do “power pumping” with a single pump. However, the single pumps are mostly less effective. Pumping also takes more time and you lose the valuable pauses that you could use for yourself (with the single pump, the other breast is pumped instead of pausing)
- › Even if “power pumping” takes up to an hour, you only need to put the pumped milk in the refrigerator at the end of the pumping phase.
- › Use the pauses to drink a little, to have a small snack, to have a shower and/or to massage the breast
- › If you use pump bras, then you have your hands and head free for other things
- › Don’t worry if you can only get drops of milk during “power pumping”. The goal is not to immediately pump the milk that is needed, but to give the breast the necessary signals for milk production.
- › Stay flexible and tolerant with yourself. The background for “power pumping” is the more frequent breastfeeds which should stimulate the milk production. Look for the variety of pump that best fits your daily schedule and/or combine the pumping with breastfeeding or pump directly after breastfeeding. Better to pump once for 5 minutes than not at all!
- › Use the time of “power pumping” for yourself. Read a good book, enjoy a small snack, spoil yourself and let yourself be spoiled
- › Try to remain patient and to think positively. For many women, a noticeable increase in the amount of milk can be seen within 3 days. Other mothers need up to 14 days to achieve the maximum effect of “power pumping”.
- › An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) can inform you about further measures to promote milk production and pumping and work out a plan with you for transitioning from pumping to breastfeeding that is doable for you and your baby.
- › You can be proud of yourself and your efforts even under possibly difficult conditions.



REFERENCES:

- › Human Milk in the NICU : Policy Into Practice, Lois D.W. Arnold
- › Europäisches Institut für Stillen und Laktation – Gewinnen von Muttermilch per Hand und Milchpumpe <http://livingwithlowmilksupply.com/power-pumping-to-increase-milk-supply>
- › Breastfeeding Management for the Clinician – Using the Evidence; Marsha Walker, Second Edition; Jones and Bartlett



IBCLC

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants are the only internationally approved breastfeeding and lactation specialists having a medical background.

The decision to breastfeed or not to breastfeed has short- and long-term impact on the health of child and mother. However, breastfeeding sometimes turns out to be difficult and perhaps professional, competent assistance is needed.

Contact your IBCLC