

# Breast Pumps...hire or buy?

## Parent information

There are many reasons why you might need to express breast milk. Hand expressing is a great skill to learn and can be done anywhere (refer to the 'Hand Expressing Technique' poster and/or information sheet). Some mothers may need to express for only a short time (i.e. less than 1 month) while others may need to express for longer.

### Manual breast pump

If you only need to express a few times each day, such as when you go back to work, then a manual pump (hand operated pump) is probably all you need. Manual pumps are good once you have already established your milk production.

### Electric breast pump

If you need to pump to establish your milk production or need to express more than 3 times per day, such as when your baby is unwell or premature, then a **hospital grade breast pump** is the best option for you.

### Breast pump rental

If you decide to hire, we recommend that you research price comparisons (online or by phone) to get the best price. Also, you will need to:

- purchase the pump kit/s from the rental outlet which will be yours to keep and clean (this is a health requirement).
- pay a deposit on the pump (refunded when the pump is returned undamaged).
- pay the weekly or monthly fee that the rental outlet requires.

### Rental options

- *Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)* – the ABA hires pumps to members and non-members, with members receiving a discount on the hire cost.
  - Go to ABA's website: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/pumphire>.
  - Consider contacting ABA as a first call, as they offer a lot of follow up support and troubleshooting advice as part of their service.
- *Pharmacy or baby hire outlets* – if you do a web search for 'breast pump hire' you will find several options available.

### Breast pump purchase

- As mentioned above, if you are expressing over a long period of time or are establishing your milk production, then a **hospital grade pump** is the best one to use. These have larger motors that will handle being used 8 or more times each day, without burning out the motor.
- **Mini-electric pumps** can usually only manage up to 3 pump sessions per day (refer to the manufacturer's recommendations), and if you do pump more than the manufacturer recommends then the motor may burn out and the pump vacuum diminish. If you are planning to use a pump more than 3-4 times per day and you opt to buy a mini-electric pump, you may find that you will not effectively stimulate your milk production and possibly waste your money if the pump fails.
- **Hospital grade pumps** can be quite expensive, and the price will vary depending on whether the pump has a 'single' or a 'double' pump set-up. However, if you figure out how long you will need to pump and compare it to

the cost of hiring a pump (including purchasing the kits etc.) it may work out to be more economical to buy a pump than to hire one.

- **Tricks of the trade:** If you need to express fully for your baby in the neonatal unit and you don't want to buy the hospital grade pump, then an option might be for you to hand express or use a mini-electric pump/manual pump overnight and then come into the neonatal unit to use the hospital grade pumps during the day (for example, do 2–3 pumps overnight on your mini-electric pump and then 6–7 pumps on the nursery pumps during the day).

## Websites

If you want to look into buying a pump, check out these websites (listed in alphabetical order):

- <http://www.ameda.com/breast-pumps>
- <https://www.ardo.com.au/>
- <http://www.medela.com.au/breastfeeding>
- <https://spectra-baby.com.au/>

## Remember to look for:

- A hospital grade pump or a quality brand pump with a large motor
- A pump that can be used 8 or more times each day
- Preferably a double pumping option
- Best warranty and servicing options

## Buying off the internet

We encourage you to purchase breast pumps from reputable outlets so that you get the best value and protection for your investment. If anything goes wrong with your pump you can return it for repair/replacement, so don't forget to hold on to your receipt!

**We do not recommend that you purchase second hand breast pumps off the internet**, because you do not know the history of the pump, the previous owner might have damaged the pump or the pump may be contaminated when you purchase it – there will be no return or repair option available to you.

## For more information

- Queensland Health booklet 'Child Health Information Your guide to the first 12 months'
- Queensland Health Breastfeeding website: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/breastfeeding/>
- The Australian Breastfeeding Association's Helpline 1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 268) or <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

## Any further questions?

This fact sheet provides general information. If you have any questions about your baby's care, we encourage you speak to the midwives, nurses and medical staff.



Consumers contributed  
to this information.