



RELACTATION
STARTER GUIDE



Relactation is the process of someone bringing in a milk supply--full or partial--after having had a lapse in milk production. Every person's journey will be different, but with a skilled support team, many people find success. Usually the earlier you get started the better, but there have been cases of someone bringing in milk even a decade after they last produced milk.

This guide will help you define your own personal goal, learn about your local resources, and make a personalized plan to bring in and maintain a milk supply.

Regardless of your goal for starting this process, The Nest is here to cheer you on!

You've got this!

STEP ONE: DEFINE YOUR GOAL

Every person's goal will be different. Some would like to have a full supply of 24-30 ounces of milk. Others are happy to have just enough for one bottle each day. You call the shots! So in an ideal situation, how much milk would you like to provide to your child?

FULL SUPPLY: 24-30 OUNCES PER 24 HOUR PERIOD

A full supply is defined by 24-30 ounces of breastmilk in a 24 hour period. This choice has a high commitment level and will require a strict pumping routine. Success may vary depending on individual circumstances--such as how long it has been since you last produced milk, or various underlying health conditions.

PARTIAL SUPPLY: ANYTHING LESS THAN 24 OUNCES IN A 24 HOUR PERIOD

A partial supply is any amount of milk less than 24 ounces in a 24 hour period. The commitment level is similar in the beginning, but may relax a little once you get established. This is a great option for families who are only looking to provide a few bottles each day.

**Keep in mind: Generally speaking, the longer it has been since you last produced milk, the longer it will take you to relactate.*

STEP TWO: GATHER YOUR TOOLS

Now that you have set your goal, you'll need to gather a few tools. Here's a basic list of things you'll need to get started, along with some items that are nice to have, but not necessary.

MUST HAVES

- Double Electric Pump
- Well-fitted Flanges
- Milk Storage containers
- Extra Pump Parts

NICE TO HAVES

- Hands-Free Pump Bra
- Supplements that might help your supply*
- Warm Compresses

A FEW WORDS ABOUT CHOOSING A PUMP:

As convenient as the wearable pumps sound, they simply do not do as good of a job as a more traditional style pump. Even under the best of circumstances, many people find the wearable pumps inadequate to maintain a supply. If you're already in the position of trying to relactate, a wearable pump likely will not serve you well.

Choosing a closed-system pump such as the Spectra S1 or S2, Motif, or Ameda, typically provide the best results. If you have an option to rent a hospital-grade pump, that would be beneficial as well. These are certainly not the only pump options on the market right now, so do some research or reach out to a breastfeeding professional for individualized guidance as needed.

**Not everyone needs a supplement, and some individuals may not be a good candidate for herbal supplements. Work with a breastfeeding professional if you want to start a supplement.*

STEP THREE: GET TO WORK

Ideally, you will pump every 2-3 hours, for roughly 20 minutes--though some people find it uncomfortable to pump for too long on an empty breast. 5-10 minutes may feel better in the beginning.

It's okay if every 2-3 hours is not manageable for you. The goal is for you to stimulate or empty the breast at least 8 times each day. Prioritize frequency of pumping over the length of the pumping session. Don't panic if you don't see any milk for a while. It will take a bit for your body to get the hint.

Middle of the night pumping sessions are also very beneficial because your prolactin levels are higher at night. Prolactin is the "milk making" hormone, so you'll want to take advantage of it when you can.

You can prioritize getting a longer chunk of sleep by pumping every 2 hours during the day, then skipping a pumping session at night so you get a longer chunk of sleep. You can also pump every 3-4 hours at night instead of every 2-3.

IN THE BEGINNING:

Do your best to stick with a consistent pumping routine in the beginning.

As your supply starts increasing and you reach your goal amount, you can play around with your pump routine and decide if you need to continue pumping this frequently or if you can stretch the time in between sessions. Always make changes slowly so you can monitor your progress.

Everyone responds differently to a pump, and depending on various health factors, you may need to pump more frequently than another person.

STEP FOUR: KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

How to obtain a pump: Pumps can be purchased online by an individual, but before you purchase one, check to see if your insurance provides a pump to you for free.

Edgepark.com, Aeroflow.com, LactationNetwork.com are all durable medical supply companies (DMEs) that can help you use your insurance benefits to get a pump at either low cost, or NO cost to you.

It is not recommended to purchase or borrow a used pump unless the pump is a closed-system pump and in good shape. Closed-system pumps are designed with sanitation in mind. Milk will not come in contact with any part of the pump that can not be cleaned or sterilized. On the other hand, the inside of open-system pumps can grow mold over time, which could come in contact with your milk as you pump.

It is also not recommended to use a single electric or manual pump. Relactation is already labor-intensive, so a good double electric is very important.

Knowing who you can turn to with questions or with troubleshooting challenges is an important component of insuring your success. Breastfeeding professionals have the specific skillset needed to walk you through relactation.

You can find help at The Nest, of course, but the WIC program has professionals who can help, and you may also find qualified specialists at your pediatrician's office.

TIPS FOR PUMPING

- **Make sure you're using the correct flange size.** Only the nipple should be pulled into the tunnel of the flange. If the areola is also entering the flange, choose the next smallest size. You can find smaller flanges online through the pump's manufacturer website, or through websites like Amazon. Many people find success using after-market flanges by Maymom, which can be purchased on Amazon. Just be sure to select the correct size and pump type when purchasing.
- **You could consider taking supplements** to encourage growth of the glandular portion of the breast known for making milk. Goat's Rue is a commonly used by people who are attempting to relactate - but, as with any herbal or pharmaceutical, use caution and speak with your healthcare team to determine if they are right for you.
- **Pump on the go!** You can purchase a battery pack or car adapter for most pumps, which will allow you to use your pump while in the car. Just be wise and make sure your pump equipment is secure and turned on before taking your car out of park. Leave everything in place until you've reached a safe place to adjust or remove the flanges or to turn the pump off.
- **For overnight pumping,** you can bring a cooler with icepacks to your room so that you will not have to walk back to the kitchen to put things away. Just store everything, including your pump pieces, in the cooler until morning.
- **Use your hands!** Studies have shown that by taking a hands-on approach to pumping, you can increase your supply by a full 1/3rd! That's a ton of milk! Start by gently massaging your breasts before pumping, then use your hands to gently compress your breasts during the pumping session. Once the session is over, hand express for a few minutes on each side.



SLEEPY BABY? LOW SUPPLY? *Use your hands!*

Studies show that when mothers use their hands during breastfeeding or pumping, they make more milk, and their babies nurse better.

STEP ONE: GENTLE BREAST MASSAGE BEFORE NURSING OR PUMPING

Before beginning a nursing or pumping session, gently massage your breasts. This not only helps incorporate more fat into your milk, but it can help your milk start flowing quicker.

STEP TWO: GENTLE COMPRESSIONS DURING NURSING OR PUMPING SESSION

Once baby is latched or you have started your pump, use gently compressions starting at the outer edge of your breast and moving toward your nipple. This can make it easier for sleepy or small babies to move the milk more efficiently.

STEP THREE: HAND EXPRESSION FOR ONE MINUTE ON EACH SIDE AFTER NURSING OR PUMPING

The easiest way to make more milk is to remove milk more thoroughly and more often. Hand expressing at the end of a nursing or pumping session will ensure that your breasts are as empty as possible - which will signal to your body to make more!

Still having trouble? Give us a call!