

Effective Milk Activation

If milk-producing cells are not properly activated in the first few days after birth, it can delay milk production and affect long-term supply. This often occurs when an infant struggles to effectively stimulate the breast, making immediate lactation support crucial when breastfeeding challenges arise.

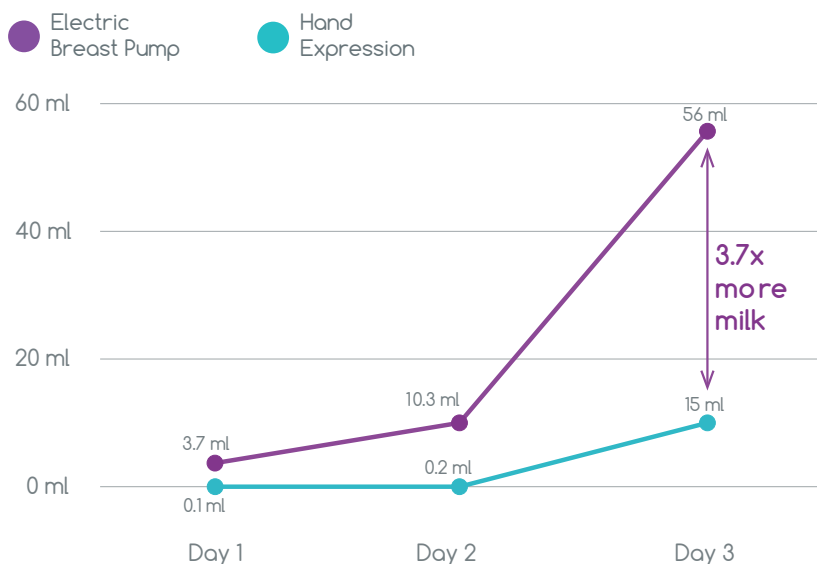
Why it matters!

Electric Pumping vs. Hand Expression

To support ineffective feeding, hand expression and electric breast pumps are commonly used to help establish and maintain milk supply.

Research shows that electric pumps are far more effective at increasing milk volume, as they create the vacuum needed to stimulate the prolactin response. This response is essential for activating milk-producing cells and removing colostrum.

Hand expression is an essential tool to complement the breastfeeding journey. However, in contrast to breast pumping, it lacks the necessary vacuum, making it less effective at promoting milk production.



An RCT study on mothers of very low birth weight infants found that by day 3, electric pumping produced 3.7 times more milk than hand expression.¹

Additionally, mothers who delayed using an electric pump until after day 7 did not reach the same milk volumes as those who started electric pumping earlier.¹

Supporting effective milk activation

Effective breastfeeding is the gold standard, providing optimal sucking to stimulate the breast and remove colostrum.

	Vacuum	Tactile Compression	Colostrum collection	Active effective milk-making cells
	✓	✓	✓	✓

Early breast stimulation and effective milk removal can help support the establishment of milk production. Working together, breast massage, hand expression and pumping can help stimulate and build milk supply.

Collect

Teaching hand expression is vital in supporting mothers throughout their breastfeeding journey. It uses gentle tactical compression to stimulate milk ejection and facilitate the collection of colostrum.

Express

Expressing provides additional breast stimulation, which can help to establish and maintain an adequate milk supply. Electric breast pumps use controlled vacuum pressure to stimulate the breast and promote the release of prolactin, supporting the activity of the milk-producing cells.

	Vacuum	Tactile Compression	Colostrum collection	Active effective milk-making cells
	✓	✓	✓	✓

When effective breastfeeding isn't possible, combining hand expression with pumping can provide a practical approach to collecting colostrum while supporting effective breast stimulations and milk removal.^{2, 3} Hand expression can be particularly valuable during the early colostrum period, while electric pumping supports the establishment of milk supply.^{2, 3} Evidence suggests that combining hand expression and breast compression with electric pumping may help support increased milk production in mothers of preterm infants.²