

Information for breastfeeding families

Promoting Let-down and Milk Flow



“Let down” occurs when the milk releases and generously flows from the breast, stimulated by the hormone oxytocin. It usually occurs about 1-3 minutes after the start of breastfeeding or using a breast pump. Try these suggestions to let the milk flow.

Promote relaxation

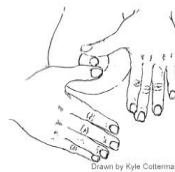
- ✓Take several deep breaths and close your eyes before you begin
- ✓Visualization:
 - *Imagine the beach or other relaxing place: Use all five senses: imagine the sights, smells, taste, sound and sensations around you in this location
 - *Try to visualize and "feel" what the let-down response feels like.
 - *Imagine your milk flowing or use images of waterfalls or a river of milk
 - *Think of your baby's soft little hand moving at your breast
- ✓Look at pictures of your baby
- ✓Listen to the sound of your baby cooing or “talking” to you. Even a cry can be helpful.
- ✓Smell your baby's unwashed shirt or blanket
- ✓If you are in any pain, take Advil or Tylenol about 30 minutes before you expect to nurse. Pain can cause stress and inhibit let-down
- ✓Set up a “nursing nook” where you always go to breastfeed or pump that is quiet and without distraction. Have a comfy chair, pillows, footstool, soothing music, and warm beverages easily available
- ✓Hold your baby skin-to-skin
- ✓Get in a warm bath with baby and nurse there
- ✓Singing or humming may speed let-down
- ✓Distract yourself – listen to a podcast, talk on the phone, read a book, etc.
- ✓Place a heating pad or warm herb pack on your shoulders and/or across your breasts
- ✓Have a helper massage your back and shoulders before and while you nurse

Nipple stimulation to release oxytocin

One minute of moist heat, massage, nipple rolls and gentle tugging. Rest two minutes then pump or feed your baby.

Reverse Pressure Softening

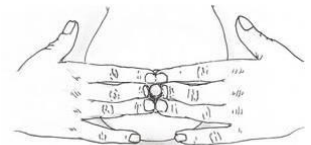
Apply direct pressure on the areola with your fingertips



Drawn by Kyle Cotterman



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Breast massage

- ✓Helper stands behind mom using non-scented lotion or massage oil
- ✓Warm compresses
- ✓Start around the areola
- ✓Work tips of fingers in circles around breast clockwise
- ✓Gently and gradually apply pressure to stubborn areas
- ✓Apply breast compressions periodically



Hands-on pumping
<https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding-maximizing-milk-production.html>