

Does the Type of Breast Pump Matter for a NICU Mom?

Mothers who use a breast pump to provide milk for a NICU baby are different from other new mothers.

NICU babies are usually too small or too sick to feed directly at the breast, so the pump needs to work like a full-term breastfeeding baby, so you make as much milk as possible. Like a breastfeeding baby, the breast pump needs to remove milk **effectively, efficiently** and **comfortably**. **Effective** means that the pump removes as much of the milk in the breast as possible. **Efficient** means that the pump removes the milk as quickly as possible. **Comfortably** means that the pump does not hurt or irritate the nipple tissue.

Not all breast pumps are designed for NICU mothers because they lack effectiveness, efficiency and comfort. For example, breast pumps received as baby shower gifts or shipped from an insurance company are not intended for round-the-clock use. You should use a **hospital-grade electric breast pump**, especially during the first month after birth when your breasts are beginning to make milk. These breast pumps are available for **rental**, and may be available free of charge, at a discounted fee, or reimbursed by



an insurance company when the baby is in the NICU. Rest assured that when your baby goes home from the NICU, you can use the shower gift or insurance pump.

The right pump is the most important thing for providing milk for your NICU baby, especially during the first month after birth. The NICU lactation experts can help you find a suitable pump, and can give you a letter signed by your baby's doctor saying that he or she has prescribed your milk for your baby that you can give to your insurance company.

Pump Feature	Manual Pump Battery-Operated Pump Small Electric Pump	Personal Pump, includes Double Electric Pumps	Hospital-Grade Electric Pump
Number of lifetime users	One	One	More than one
Collection kit	Milk removed from one breast at a time Most do not allow different breast shield sizes	May have two collection kits (one for each breast), but suction not always applied to both breasts at the same time	Capable of "double pumping" (suction applied to both breasts at the same time) Many choices of collection kit sizes and types
Suction patterns	Range from no ability to some ability to change suction strength	Most allow adjustment of suction pressure Some allow you to change the rhythm of the suction	Complete ability to change the strength and the rhythm of suction May have special suction patterns that feel like a full-term baby during breastfeeding
Which pump for which mother?	Brief separations from a healthy full-term breastfeeding baby <i>The baby does the work of keeping lactation going</i>	Mothers who are breastfeeding healthy full-term babies and return to work or school outside the home Intended for use 2-3 times daily <i>The baby does the work of keeping lactation going</i>	Mothers who have babies in the NICU, or a baby at home who is receiving pumped milk only from the bottle <i>The pump does the job of keeping lactation going because the baby cannot</i>



Disclaimer

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We look forward to your inquiry at: contact@lactahub.org