

## FEEDING/Pumps

### OVERVIEW

The benefits of breastfeeding are great. Breastfed infants face a reduced risk for sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections, gastrointestinal infections, and respiratory infections, and are less likely to develop chronic conditions such as asthma, obesity, lymphoma, and types 1 and 2 diabetes.

Breastfeeding also has short- and long-term brain development benefits. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, with continuing nursing as solid foods are introduced through at least baby's first birthday or longer. Around the world, nursing often continues for several years beyond this.

Exclusive breastfeeding can be a challenge for some women - breast pumps help those moms provide all or most of their babies' milk. Even if mom will be staying home and nursing directly most of the time, there will likely be times they'll want to express milk and store it for later. In response to this, there are many pumps available, ranging from simple hand pumps for occasional use, to electric pumps that allow both breasts to express at the same time. Even better news: the Affordable Care Act requires insurance companies to cover the cost of breast pumps, and though the extent of coverage can differ between plans, you should look at insurance coverage before you shop, so you know what will be covered. Breast pumps and breast feeding support are also provided under The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

### HIDDEN HAZARDS

While the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 required children's toys and care items to stop

using certain **phthalates**, items for adults, including breast pumps, do not fall under that restriction. Some tubing is still made of **polyvinyl chloride (PVC)**.

**Bisphenols** may also be used - many companies will list being BPA-free, but not whether they also avoid similar compounds.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The features you'll want vary based on how you plan to use it. Consider whether you'll have flexibility in which bottles you attach to the pump (the size of the mouth of the bottle makes a difference). If you'll be pumping occasionally, you may just want a hand-pump, which takes longer to use. Electric pumps vary on whether you can use a battery, if the airflow that creates suction is open (meaning liquid can get into the tubing) or closed (the tubing will stay dry). Some only let you pump one side at a time, some will do both (and there are hands-free pumping bras that may assist).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Look for a model that meets your needs based on use, and that avoids phthalates (and preferably all polyvinyl chloride - PVC) and bisphenols. The information about the materials used by breast pump manufacturers differs significantly and is often deep in the FAQs on their website (not in their product descriptions for retailers).

### REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Learn more about the hidden hazards by reviewing the [glossary](#) or take a deep dive by reading [Safer Products for Babies and Toddlers: Resources and Recommendations for Retailers](#).

Learn more about the [benefits of breastfeeding](#) via the American Academy of Pediatrics.