

Collecting milk while breastfeeding

do not "feed your freezer" at your baby's expense!

If you are actively or passively collecting milk while you pump or nurse on the other breast, please make sure that your baby is getting all the milk that your baby needs, rather than storing what might appear to be "extra" milk.

What is active and what is passive collection of milk?

Active collection of milk is using an electric or manual pump to remove milk from your breast. Passive collection is "catching" milk as it drips from your breast, usually because you are pumping or nursing on the other breast. The Haakaa is a manual pump (active collection) that some mothers also use as a passive collection device. There are now several brands of passive collection devices available.

How do you avoid taking milk your baby would like to eat?

If your baby is less than six to eight weeks old, your baby may not let you know that he or she is still hungry after one breast, or even after both breasts. Your baby may want to nurse again shortly to finish the feed. If you actively remove milk while your baby is feeding, and you do not offer this milk to your baby, you may find that your baby is not getting all the milk your baby needs and may not be gaining well.

ONCE BREASTFEEDING IS WELL ESTABLISHED, if you would like to collect milk for storage, offer your first breast, and use breast compressions to increase your milk flow when suckling slows. When your baby is no longer actively feeding on the first breast, apply the Haakaa or other collecting device to the first breast as you offer the second breast. It is important to make sure that your baby has the chance to remove milk in your breast before collecting milk for your freezer, so your baby continues to gain well.

Saving milk for use at a LATER date is less important than your baby gaining well NOW. The younger your baby is, the more important your milk is to your baby.

How do you know that breastfeeding is "well-established"?

When an exclusively breastfed baby (no bottles and no pumped milk or formula) is at least three to four weeks old and gaining well when weighed naked once a week, breastfeeding is usually considered well-established. At this time, if you choose to collect milk while feeding your baby, continue to check your baby's naked weight at least weekly until your baby's two-month check-up. If your baby is gaining well at two months, you should be able to trust your baby to tell you that he or she is getting enough to eat. If your baby was born prematurely, please use a "corrected" age of two months after your due date.

If you leak profusely when your baby nurses, can you passively collect milk on the other side?

If one breast leaks while you nurse on the other breast, feel free to use a Haakaa or Milkies to collect milk, vs. leaking into a pad or burp cloth. However, do not hesitate to offer that breast to your baby after he or she finishes the first breast. If your baby is still hungry, offer the "collected" milk by bottle.

Can you use a Haaka to actively collect milk to supplement your baby who is NOT gaining well?

Possibly. However, Milk Works HIGHLY encourages you to work with an IBCLC to help you determine if this is a good choice for you and your baby.



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