

# Choosing a Breast Pump

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An information leaflet from the Breastfeeding Walk-in Clinic, Mater Dei Hospital. Phone: 25454445

A breast pump can be a useful utensil to express your breast milk. You may need to express milk frequently because you return to work or just occasionally for an evening out. This leaflet will explain what pump is recommended for different situations. Not all types of pump are available on the Maltese market but can be found easily through internet.

## HOSPITAL GRADE BREAST PUMPS

This is a large powerful breast pump, available for use within most hospitals. With this pump you can control the speed and the strength of the suction. Double pumping, expressing from both breasts at the same time is another feature of this pump. Double pumping, is both more effective and less time consuming. A Hospital grade pump can be hired privately but is quite expensive. This pump is fast and effective but large so it is not practical to take out with you.

## MIDWEIGHT BREAST PUMP

This is a smaller, less powerful version of the hospital grade pump. The strength and speed can be controlled and allow double pumping. This pump takes a lot of the effort out of frequent pumping and is a big advantage to a working mother but does tend to be expensive.

## SMALL ELECTRIC OR BATTERY OPERATED PUMP

This is the small motorized breast pump found easily in the Maltese market, costing around £M30.00 - £M40.00 Suction strength may or may not be

adjustable although this is a positive feature. This is always a single pump so more time is spent to express from each breast separately. Some have a constant vacuum which can be quite uncomfortable and if you are unable to create the right rhythm it will also be very ineffective. If the pump has a suction release button then it will have this feature. On the whole this type of pump is quite efficient and effective and many working mother find it adequate. Small electric pump are also generally noisy to use.

## MANUAL BREAST PUMP

There is a large variety of hand pumps which produce suction by squeezing a bulb or lever or pulling on a syringe style cylinder. Most bulb pumps are difficult and tiring to use. Syringe style pumps need two hands but do allow you to control the strength of the suction which can make it more comfortable to use. Both these types of hand pumps are inexpensive to buy. Lever type hand pumps are easier to use and the latest models have a very comfortable suction strength. This type of pump is ideal for expressing an occasional, bottle but are tiring to use more than once or twice a day. Some manual pumps convert to electric which does give the advantage to use both ways giving you flexibility.

There is no need to invest in a breast pump before birth; ideally you should establish breastfeeding first. Using a feeding bottle during the first three weeks can lead to breastfeeding failure. Breastfeeding pumps can be complicated to use in the beginning with the need to be assembled correctly for the pump to work effectively.

You are welcome to visit the breastfeeding clinic with your breast pump to be given a demonstration on how to assemble and use it.