

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 3-1 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



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

