

Information for breastfeeding families

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 2-3 minutes after the start of breastfeeding or using a breast pump. The “let-down” might not occur easily if you are worried or stressed. Try these suggestions to let the milk flow.

Promote relaxation

- ✓ Take a warm shower or bath prior to nursing.
- ✓ 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, warm beverages easily available
- ✓ 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 such as the salt air, sensations such of the sand under you or the warmth of the sun on your skin, imagine tastes and what you might hear
- *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

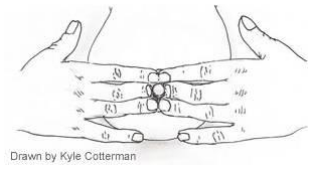
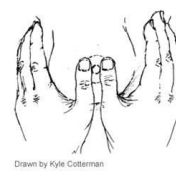
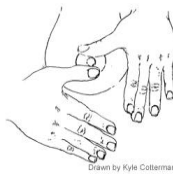
- *Excellent book on visualization techniques is *Mind Over Labor* by Carl Jones
- ✓ Hold your baby skin-to-skin
- ✓ Get in a warm bath with baby and nurse there
- ✓ Singing or humming can speed let-down
- ✓ Distract yourself - watch TV, talk on the phone, read a book, etc
- ✓ Place a heating pad or warm herb pack on your shoulders and/or across your breasts
- ✓ Have a helper massage your back and shoulders before and while you nurse with aromatic oil such as Clarins Relaxing Massage Oil
- ✓ Switch nurse: move baby back and forth frequently between breasts

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 finger tips



Herbals and medications

- ✓ Red raspberry tea
- ✓ Bach Rescue Remedy
4 drops under tongue, can be repeated for additional let-downs
- ✓ Syntocinon, oxytocin nasal spray (requires a prescription)
Compounding pharmacy (40 U/ml)
Spray 1-2 sprays per nostril 5-10 minutes before feeding or breast pumping
Additional sprays may be used during the session

Breast massage

- ✓ Helper stands behind mom using non-scented lotion or massage oil
- ✓ Warm compresses
- ✓ Start under arm
- ✓ Work tips of fingers in circles around breast clockwise
- ✓ Gently and gradually apply pressure to stubborn areas
- ✓ Apply breast compression periodically



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