

Breast Pumps: Casey Bedder, DO

Intro

My name is Casey Bedder. I am a faculty OB-GYN generalist at Christiana Hospital. And I also serve as the Medical Director of the postpartum unit as well as Associate Program Director of the OB-GYN residency.

Why would a breastfeeding person use a breast pump?

So there are many reasons why a woman or breastfeeding person would use a breast pump. First and foremost, to feed the baby. Otherwise, they can use it to protect their supply or to establish a supply.

How do you define a successful pumping session?

I think to define a successful pumping session, you need to know why a person is pumping. So if it is to feed the baby, I would say a successful pumping session is until the breasts feel empty. If it is to establish a supply, it is in, just that- to stimulate the breast. And if it is to protect the supply, it is just to stimulate the breast and empty the breast of whatever breast milk is in there.

Which factors impact the success of pumping session?

One of them is time. So the amount of time you have to pump, the efficiency of the pump that you're using, the environment that you're in, and as well as the proximity of your child.

What are the different types of breast pumps?

There are many different types of breast pumps. There's manual breast pumps, there's electric breast pumps. And then there is also hands-free breast pumps. Manual breast pumps, I think, are easy to use when you don't have access to electricity or you're more traveling. Electric breast pumps are easier to use, whether it when you're in the hospital or you're at home. And the hands-free breast pumps are better to use also with travel or when working.

What advice do you have for choosing a pump?

When I'm talking about what breast pump to recommend, I usually tell patients one to go with something that their insurance currently will cover because finance is often a challenge, as well as something that works for their lifestyle. So usually that is a double electric breast pump because I find the manual breast pumps to be more challenging to use. And usually the specific brand I recommend is the Spectra breast pump that has the battery operating feature.

I have found anecdotally and through other colleagues that the Spectra is the best breast pump that we have access to currently in terms of the double electric breast pumps. Because I find that it is light, it is easy to use, and it really provides the power necessary to have a fast, efficient pumping session.

What are some features and frustrations of breast pumps?

Portability is a big problem when using breast pumps, as well as ease of use. Or- the other thing that I really like about the Spectra is that it has a timer feature, so you can know how long you've been pumping to either recognize when a letdown will happen or if you have a delayed letdown, which not all pumps have. I also think that the ease of multiple like the attachments and able to use them and interchange them makes it easier to use a breast pump. And I think that being able to have different attachments that fit different breasts, since no breasts are the same. And therefore that also needs- is a really important feature to have a good pumping session- is really important.

How does a breastfeeding person know which products are safe and effective?

In order to sort out which products are best, I think you need to- a lot of it unfortunately is trial and error because since every breastfeeding person is individual, you don't know what's going to exactly work for you until you try it. But talking to the experts, whether it's your OBGYN physician, your pediatrician, your lactation consultant, or really friends and family that have had successful breastfeeding journeys and seeing what worked for them and trying that. But I really feel unfortunately it is trial and error because every woman or breastfeeding person is different.

What are some design criteria for breast pumps?

So I think that important things to know about breast pumps for not only as a physician recommending it to my patients, but as a professional mom who exclusively breastfed both my children- My first I exclusively pumped for 13 months and then my younger daughter, I breastfed until I went back to work and then exclusively pumped for 15 months. So the ability to be efficient, so have the power to be able to pump in a timely fashion. The portability of the pump is important if you have to use a double electric breast pump and to be able to adapt to different breasts and breast sizes and nipples and nipple sizes and things like that is very important in order to help women successfully breastfeed, especially when returning to work. And it's so important for a lot of us. In addition, I know some- the supply changes and whatnot when you're returning to work or if you're away from your baby for a long time or if you're dehydrated. So having the ability to change the settings and to try to increase your supply and have that fluctuate as needed is important.

How do you determine which settings to use?

So to determine your settings, it really is trial and error to see how efficient you would be with letdown and emptying of the breast. So it really is to kind of trial and error- there usually is standard settings that you can try and then you adjust from there to see what works for you and your breast to empty and get a letdown.