

What to Pack in Your Breastpumping Bag

Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Sunday, September 14 2008 11:33

If you'll be away from your nursing baby for the day, you'll need to pump both to keep your milk supply up and to relieve breast fullness. Every mom needs to pack her pumping bag with certain essentials to make her pumping as easy as possible.

When it's time for you to pump your milk and you open your pumping bag, what will you need?

An insulated bag. Depending on the kind of pump you're using, you may be able to fit everything you need into one of the larger insulated lunchboxes.

Frozen cold packs. You'll only need one or two to keep your milk icy cold until you get home. If your office has a refrigerator, you can store your milk there. However, be aware that some people may be uncomfortable seeing your filled bottles in the fridge, so take along some sort of bag to put your bottles in while they're in the fridge.

Your pump. If you're skilled at hand-expression, you can forego the pump. If you aren't, you'll need to pack the pump and all its associated components in your bag. You'll be dealing with, at a minimum, a "horn," a pumping mechanism, a container into which the milk is expressed, and some means of sealing the container; naturally, more elaborate pumps will have more parts. You may want to consider making up a checklist so that you can check off each item you'll need – there's nothing worse than needing to pump and finding you're missing a key piece.

It may be a good idea to pack the parts in a couple zippered plastic bags so that the pieces that need washing are separate from those that don't. If your pump is powered, be sure you have the power cord or fresh batteries in your bag at all times.

Containers for your milk. You can use bottles and caps for your breast milk. [I found that, once emptied, the sample water and formula bottles that are often given to new mothers by the hospital or pediatrician were the perfect size for my moderate milk output; they also came with nice, tight lids.] You could also use bags that are specially made for breast milk; be sure that you've labeled the bags before you fill them and that you've brought along a means of sealing them. I suggest that you bring along zippered bags for your milk containers so that, heaven forbid, if there's a leak, it'll be contained.

A baby blanket or other item to drape over your shoulder for modesty, in case your pumping area isn't as private as you'd like.

A cloth diaper, washcloth, or some other means of cleaning up any spills, although you could certainly use the blanket or whatever you've used to drape yourself.

Those are the necessities for your pumping bag. Now, here are some items you may want to consider adding:

- A triggering mechanism, such as a picture of your baby, an item of clothing that has her smell, or even an MP3 player with a recording of your baby's voice can be helpful if you find it difficult to relax and let the milk flow.
- A glass of water to help you stay hydrated.
- A nutritious snack to keep your energy up.
- Something to read, a laptop, or a pad of paper and pen so that you can focus on something other than your pumping.
- A watch or timer, so that you don't lose track of time.

If I had to give you one piece of advice about pumping, it would be this: relax. If you're anxious about pumping, your body will have a much tougher time relaxing and achieving letdown. Nothing can inhibit you quite as much as staring intently at the bottle or bag to see how much is there. The times when I was able to pump the most milk (and it was never a whole lot more than 4 to 6 ounces) were when I got my mind off the task at hand. Keep in mind, too, that your baby is a much more efficient milk extractor than any pump you'll find.

A positive, relaxed attitude is the best thing you can bring along with you ... in addition to your pumping bag. As you become a more experienced pumper, you'll find that packing your pumping bag will become as easy and automatic as packing a lunch, briefcase, or purse.

Laurel Haring is a writer and editor. She and her family live in Delaware. Laurel worked part time after the birth of each of her sons and pumped at least twice every workday for a combined total of about 5 years.

<http://www.typeamom.net/what-to-pack-in-your-breastpumping-bag.html>