



Breastfeeding
Committee
for Saskatchewan

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IMPORTANT

As you consider **relactation**, keep in mind that everyone's experience is individual. Approach relactation your own way and find what works the best for you and your baby.

It is important to keep in mind that breastfeeding is *not* just about the milk. It is also about the close contact between a mother and her baby which is important for a baby's physical, emotional and social development.

For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified
Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support
Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

RELACTATION

Relactation is when a woman starts breastfeeding after stopping breastfeeding for a period of time.

Reasons why you may decide to relactate:

- You were separated from your baby
- Your baby was ill
- Your baby can not tolerate formula
- Your baby may be sick and breastmilk has been recommended to help them get better
- You may have decided to wean early and changed your mind
- You may have weaned early because of breastfeeding problems

* If you weaned early because of problems with breastfeeding, you will need to work on those problems in order for relactation to be successful. To address these problems seek support from a Lactation Consultant or other health care professional trained in breastfeeding.

How does it work?

By providing stimulation to your breasts, hormonal messages are sent to your brain that turn milk production back on. Breastfeeding is a supply and demand relationship, the more the breast is stimulated and emptied, the more milk the body will produce.

How long will it take?

- Commit to at least 2 weeks of making breastfeeding your main focus.
- The amount of time it takes to relactate can take up to a month and sometimes longer. This depends on the amount of time you stopped breastfeeding.
- Babies that have breastfed previously are more willing to come back to the breast, with babies that are under 3 months having the best success.
- You may have to offer formula until your milk supply is fully established.

How should I start?

- 1) Do lots of skin to skin with your baby. Just by putting baby on your bare chest, hormones are released that help make milk.
- 2) Offer your breast every 2-3 hours and both breasts each time. If baby is refusing to nurse at the breast, try putting baby to the breast when in a sleepy state.
- 3) Ensure the baby is latching well. Get help if needed.



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- 4) Use breast massage and breast compression to help increase milk flow while baby is at the breast.
- 5) Soothers and bottle nipples should be avoided during this time. Try to keep all suckling at the breast, using supplemental nursing at the breast with expressed breast milk first, then formula until milk amounts are adequate.
- 6) Until baby is feeding well at the breast, you may need to express milk after or between feedings. Hand pumping is found to increase the amounts of milk obtained. For more information, please view this video <http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/MaxProduction.html>
- 7) You may need to take a galactagogue, which will enhance milk production. Galactagogues are either a medication prescribed (domperidone) or a herbal supplement (fenugreek, blessed thistle). Talk to your health care provider.

Some Helpful Tips:

- Keep the breast a pleasant place to be- avoid making it a battle ground.
- Try to breastfeed in a quiet place without distractions.
- Spend time touching and doing skin to skin- try taking a bath together.
- Use a baby sling or carrier to keep baby close at all times – sleep together by following safe sleeping practices.
- Be patient.

References:

1. Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple, Morbacher, N., 2010
2. Use of Galactagogues in Initiating or Augmenting the Rate of Maternal Milk Secretion: ABM Clinical Protocol #9; 2011
3. <http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/MaxProduction.html>