



By Mom@BreastPump.Com

The huge variety of breast pumps on the market these days can be overwhelming to a brand new mom. Without some serious consideration before the very day she needs one, a new mother can easily waste her money on one or more breast pumps that do not suit her needs or her personality. And the breast pump market is showing no signs in slowing down with its new innovations to choose from.

There are 4 major categories of breast pumps:

- Hand-powered (Manual) Breast Pumps
- Hand-held Motorized Breast Pumps
- Table-top Electric Breast Pumps
- Foot-powered Breast Pumps

Let me elaborate on each.

Hand-powered (Manual) Breast Pumps

These can require one hand to use, or two. This might seem like a trivial distinction, but it's NOT. If you are pumping with both hands, you cannot even answer the phone without stopping the process.

A **two-handed** manual breast pump consists of two cylinders, one inside the other, where one hand holds the flange against the breast while the other pulls down (Ameda) or away (Medela and Gerber) to produce the suction. Both hands are required to pump one breast, so both breasts cannot be pumped at once. This does give the mother full control of the suction strength & rhythm, but speaking from personal experience (because that was the only non-motorized way to pump when I had my first baby), it is a truly miserable arm-aching way to pump breast milk. It's hard to even find anybody who carries these things anymore, but if you're persistent they can still be found.

Of **one-handed** manual breast pumps, there are two basic types: the **lever-type**, which move in a natural hand lever type motion like any spray bottle, and the **pop-top**, which looks a little awkward and uses a springy rubber loop to pop-up a little cylinder above the flange to produce the suction. Most of the lever-types these days come with nice cushy flanges of varying styles to help stimulate the breast and encourage the milk ejection reflex. The pop-top (by Ameda) can be retrofitted with Ameda's Flexishield (silicone flange insert, sold separately) to make it cushy. Of course if you want to double-pump with either of these types of pumps, you'll have to double-buy it, that is buy two.

Hand-held Motorized Breast Pumps

These little jobbies place the motor right on top of the flange, which sits on top of the milk-collection bottle. Some of them can be plugged into an outlet, but many of them take batteries. Some (perhaps most) of these require lifting a finger off of a finger-tap hole to create the rhythm for breast pumping.

Many of these hand-held motorized pumps are extremely loud, which destroys any illusion of privacy in a work environment. **Noise** might not be a problem in all situations, but if it factors into your situation, do not be afraid to ask to hear it before you buy it.

The **exception** to most of these comments on small motorized pumps is WhisperWear's little round lavender gem. It looks like a 4-inch mushroom cap that sits on your breast under your bra (hands free), with a tube extending down into a breast milk collection bag (rather than hard bottle) under your shirt. I've seen them up close at convention, and they are auto-cycling (requiring no finger-tap hole) and are extremely quiet.

And of course if you want to double pump with any of these, you must buy two. Well, except, that is, for The First Years' motorized market contribution which comes on an (I'm sorry) ridiculous looking **T-mount** with a flange at each end.

Table-top Electric Breast Pumps

These motors sit on your table-top while the suction is transmitted through **air-tubing** to the flanges at your breasts. Depending on the brand, the flanges found on table-top breast pumps range from simple hard plastic (Medela, Ameda, Bailey Medical, yet the silicone Flexishield mentioned above fits all three), to flanges with full-air-activated breast massaging pillows inside them (Whittlestone, Playtex, & Limerick Inc.), to stimulate the milk ejection reflex. And yes, they all **double-pump** too. While these breast pumps do have motors, they are usually much quieter than the small hand-held motors discussed above. Most of them are auto-cycling, requiring no finger tap hole. And of course, we would be back to using two hands to pump, in order to hold the two flanges in place, but we would be double pumping, which halves the pumping time required, and there are some really nifty products now on the market, such as Easy Expression's hands-free pumping bras and Pumpin' Pal's neck strap, which both enable hands-free pumping.

But there is a **price** to pay for all this table-top double-pumping convenience. These pumps can run you a few hundred dollars, more if they are called "hospital grade". "Hospital grade" is code for "consider renting this one" because buying them is pricey. And the buying them is pricey, because "hospital grade" means it is approved for multiple users. Before you say "blech", the way it's done is that the mom must buy the only part that touches her body, the flange & air tubing milk collection kit (which can be pricey by itself), which she plugs into the rented table-top machine. She pays a daily rental fee, and when she's done pumping, or can't afford it anymore, she returns the machine, keeping the also pricey but now-useless flange & air tubing set, or shhhhh... sterilizing it and selling it on eBay.

Foot-powered Breast Pumps

Here we come down to it The best of the all worlds. The advantages of a foot-powered breast pump are many. It requires no batteries or electrical outlet, much less the rare outlet with privacy. It is much more portable than electric breast pumps. It's operation is virtually silent - a huge asset in many work environments, and it double-pumps without all the hand-squeezing or arm-extending effort required by manual pumps.

There are only two foot-powered breast pumps on the market, BreastPump.Com,Inc.'s *VersaPed*® (which stands for Versatile Pedal), and Medela's PedalPump. The PedalPump is a good choice. It

works well. However, it is a fairly heavy piece of wood and the design is such that the mother must press down with her heel, rather than her toe, to make it work. It is only compatible with Medela parts.

The *VersaPed*®, on the other hand, is much lighter, is lower to the ground and sits level, enabling the mother to pump with the same gentle foot-rocking motion she would use on her car's gas pedal. It was designed to fit the flange & tubing set of all table-top electric breast pumps on the market, so mothers who still have collection kits from when they pumped for their first babies, can use them again to pump for their second babies, without re-buying a whole new collection kit.

The *VersaPed*® Universal Breast Pump Pedal available as a stand-alone product to fit your existing flange & tubing set, from BreastPump.Com, Inc., or it is available complete with a flange & tubing collection kit.

Thank you for reading this little treatise of motherly wisdom, and we hope it helps you decipher the world of breast pumps.

Best Wishes from,

BreastPump.Com, Inc.

