



Used Breastpumps: Things to Think About

Rental pumps and purchased pumps are made differently. Most purchase pumps are “open systems.” This means that the motor is open and tiny milk particles can get into the working parts. These inner parts can’t be removed or cleaned well enough between mothers to insure safety. Here are some things to think about sharing “open system” pumps.

- Your baby is exposed to viruses, bacteria, and mold from the other mother’s milk- even if you use new tubing and bottles!
- Viruses from another mother’s milk can make your baby seriously sick. Even banked donor milk is pasteurized to kill viruses. A mother could have an infectious disease *without knowing it*. The FDA says:

“There are certain risks presented by breast pumps that are reused by different mothers if they are not properly cleaned and sterilized. These risks include the transmission of infectious diseases... FDA believes that the proper cleaning and sterilization of breast pumps requires the removal of any fluid that has entered the pumping mechanism itself. If proper sterilization of the breast pump cannot be achieved, FDA recommends that it not be used by different mothers.”

- Using another mother’s breastpump is a legal concern. Medela, the makers of the Pump In Style breast pump, will refuse to sell new tubing and bottles to a non-registered user. On its website, Medela says:

“It is not advisable to use a previously owned breast pump. Breast pumps are single-user products, or personal care items, much like a toothbrush, and are registered with the FDA as single user items. For safety, breast pumps should never be shared, resold, or lent among mothers. Medela strongly discourages mothers from re-using of re-selling previously owned breast pump equipment...”

- Pump motors get weaker with time. Pumps replace your baby’s sucking action, so this is a big deal! To keep your milk supply, the pump’s strength must be as close to the sucking strength of your baby as possible. If the pump’s motor is wearing out, this is bad news for your milk supply.
- Pumps wear out. It happens: soon after a mom receives a borrowed pump, it stops working. It has reached the end of its natural life. Many women feel that they need to replace the broken pump with a new pump. You would have been better off renting or buying new from the start.
- Many insurance companies are now covering breast pumps due to the Affordable Care Act. Please take the time to check with your insurance company for information on your policy. It will be well worth it for you and your baby.