



## Relactation

Relactation is restarting breastfeeding after stopping for whatever reason. It takes at least 40 days for all of the milk making cells to stop making milk and many women can stimulate milk production again with informed support. This will be easier if you are doing this in the first 3 months after birth or within 6 weeks of stopping breastfeeding, however many mothers have been successful beyond those times.

### How to start

- ◆ Keep baby skin to skin and offer the breast frequently day and night
- ◆ Begin hand expressing, this may take some practice (see our [video links](#))
- ◆ If you are feeding formula, keep the volumes smaller and more often to replicate the biological norm of small frequent feeds, cup feeding (see [video links](#)) is ideal for this
- ◆ Focus on the relationship with you and the breast, build positive experiences together
- ◆ Offer all your expressed breastmilk (preferably in a [cup](#)) and reduce the volume of formula accordingly\*
- ◆ When your baby is at the breast, encourage the [milk ejection reflex](#) (MER or let-down) by deliberate relaxation techniques, warmth and/or massage
- ◆ Observe for a change to rhythmical swallowing after MER
- ◆ Change sides when the swallowing slows or your baby has a longish pause, as you will always have a MER in both breasts - repeat
- ◆ Include as many night feeds as possible, your hormones are higher at night
- ◆ Surround yourself with positive supporters and rest when your baby rests
- ◆ Observe baby's output as an indicator of adequate milk - clear urine and regular stools
- ◆ Give yourself and your baby time, baby will be more able to use his reflexes to feed when he is calm or sleepy.

\*For volume guidance [NHMRC Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers p.79](#)