

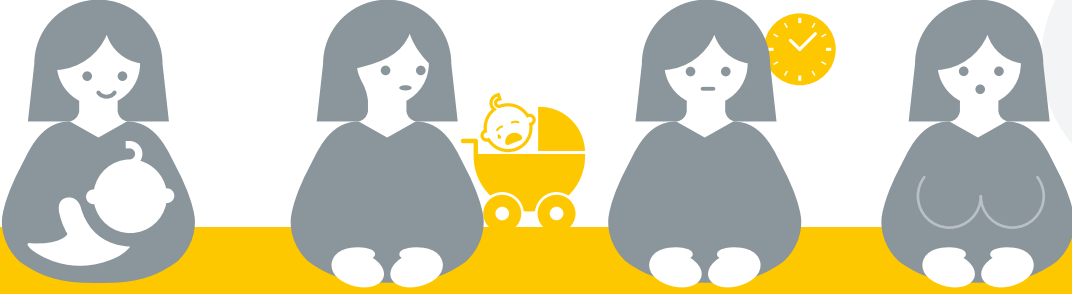
# Leaking breasts: What you need to know

## Why are my breasts leaking?

When you're breastfeeding your baby, you may notice your other breast leaking milk. This is perfectly normal and caused by something called the 'let-down' reflex (also known as the milk ejection reflex), which works like this: Your baby's sucking triggers the release of the hormone oxytocin in your body. Oxytocin acts on the muscles surrounding the tiny sacs that store milk in your breasts, making them push out or 'let down'

your milk.<sup>1</sup> And this reflex doesn't only happen during breastfeeding. You might be surprised by your breasts leaking or spraying milk when you hear your baby cry – or even when you think about him – at any time of the day or night. Leaking is often heaviest in the first weeks after the birth, because your breasts might be making more milk than your baby needs as you both get used to breastfeeding.<sup>2</sup>

Triggers for let down and leaking include<sup>2</sup>



Your baby sucking at the breast

The sound of a baby crying

Leaving a long time between feeds

Having breasts that are full of milk




**Did you know?**  
All mums are different and you may leak breast milk a lot, a little, or not at all<sup>3</sup>

## When will my leaking decrease?



## What can I do?

Fortunately, there are things you can do to manage leaks. While you may not be able to control your body's normal, natural reflexes, you can certainly lessen their impact! Here are our top three tips to help you feel prepared and confident, whether you're at home or out and about.

-  **Breastfeed**  
Breastfeeding your baby frequently, on demand, should help to relieve breast fullness.<sup>2</sup>
-  **Express**  
If you're separated from your baby, use a breast pump to remove milk as often as your baby would usually feed.<sup>2</sup>
-  **Use nursing pads**  
Pop these absorbent pads inside your bra to soak up any excess milk discretely. You can get different types to match how much milk you're leaking. Make sure you keep a supply handy and change them regularly.<sup>2</sup>

**Remember: Your amazing milk is nourishing and protecting your baby**

For more on leakage and how your milk supply works, visit [medela.com/breastmilkleakage](https://www.medela.com/breastmilkleakage)

**References** 1. Uvnäs Moberg K, Prime DK. Infant. 2013; 9(6):201–206. 2. Wambach K, Riordan J, editors. Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2016. 3. Cooke M et al. J Hum Lact 2003; 19(2):145–156. 4. Kent JC et al. Breastfeed Med. 2013; 8(4):401–407. 5. Cox DB et al. Exp. Physiol. 1999; 84(2):421–434.