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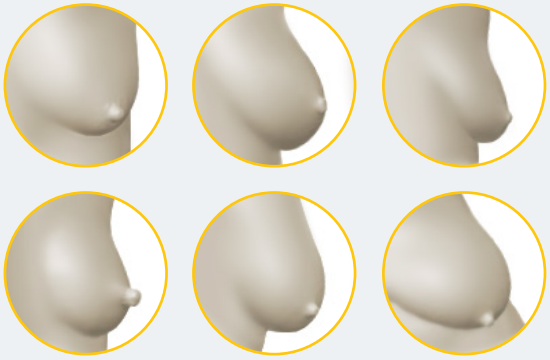
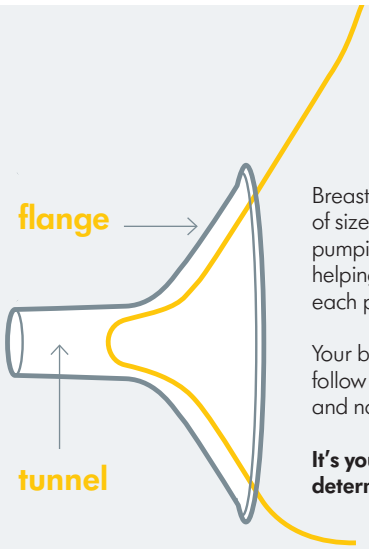
Why your choice of breast shield is key to successful pumping

Understanding your breast anatomy

Breasts come in all shapes and sizes, and can change throughout your breastfeeding journey.[1] The size of your breast might not correspond to your nipple size, and each of your nipples can be different sizes too.



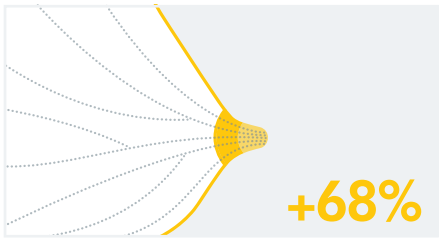


Breast shields come in a range of sizes and play a key role in pumping comfort and efficiency, helping you get more milk from each pumping session.

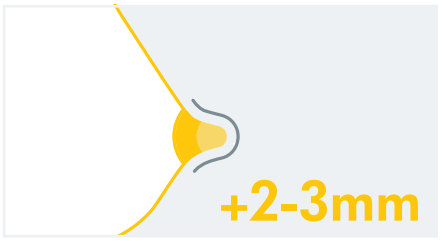
Your breast shield flange should follow the shape of your breast and not compress it.

It's your nipple diameter that determines breast shield size.

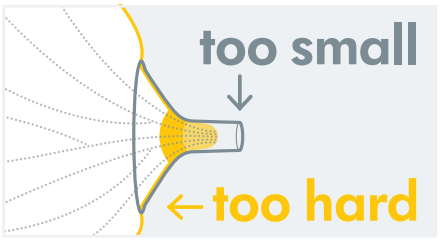
What happens when you breastfeed or pump



Your milk ducts increase in size by 68% during a let down.[2] This is to accommodate all the milk flowing through them towards your nipple.



Your nipple diameter may increase temporarily by 2 to 3 mm.[3] So your breast shield tunnel needs to be slightly bigger than your nipple.



Your milk ducts lie close to the skin's surface. Pressing the breast shield too hard or using a tunnel that's too small can obstruct milk flow.[4]

Why comfort makes a difference to successful pumping

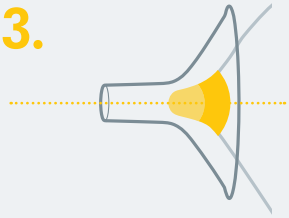
Stress and discomfort can hinder the hormone oxytocin, essential for the release of breast milk.[5] See our tips for more efficient pumping:

1. 

Using a correctly fitting breast shield is important for you to be relaxed and comfortable while pumping and helps your milk to flow.[6]

2. 

Pumping shouldn't hurt. It is important to adjust the vacuum to the highest comfortable level during the expression phase to help remove more milk in less time.[7]

3. 

Your nipple should be centred and moving freely in the tunnel during pumping. If it doesn't, you need to choose another size breast shield.

4. Selecting a pump with overflow protection – sometimes called a closed system – will allow you to pump in a position that works for you.

Find our breast shield fitting guide at www.medela.com/fittingguide and read more at www.medela.com/pumping

References: 1. Cox DB et al. Exp Physiol. 1999;84:421-434. 2. Ramsay DT et al. Pediatrics. 2004;113:361-367. 3. Geddes DT et al. Early Hum Develop. 2008 Jul 1;84:471-477. 4. Geddes, DT. J Midwifery Womens Health. 2007;52:556–563. 5. Newton M, Newton NR. J Pediatr. 1948;33:698-704. 6. Jones E, Hilton S. J Neonatal Nurs. 2009;15;15:14-17. 7. Kent JC et al. Breastfeed Med. 2008;3:11-19.

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