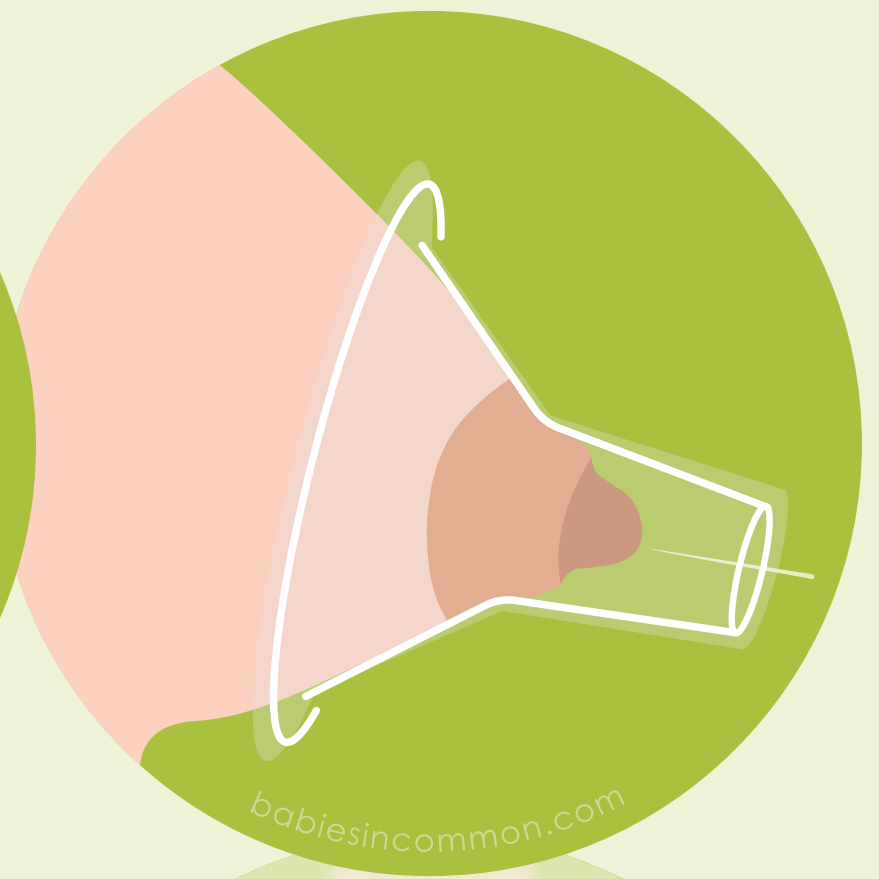
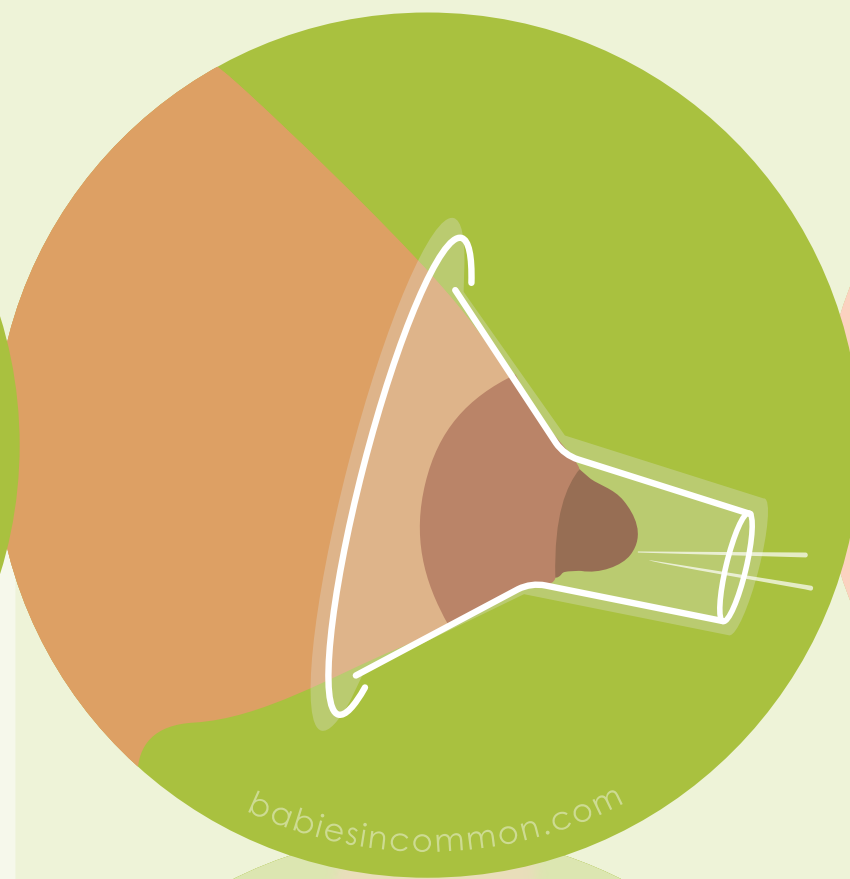
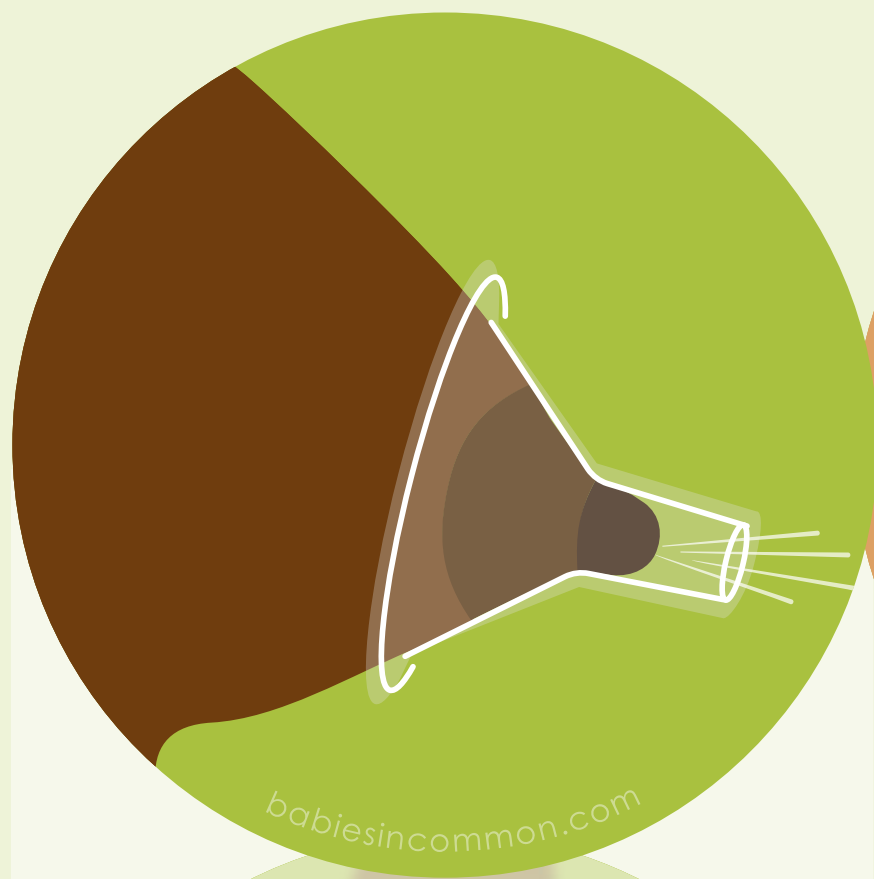


# THE FLANGE FITS™ GUIDE

for optimal comfort, efficiency and milk yield  
*a results-based fitting method*

Feel — Intensity — Tempo — Supply

SIDE VIEW



PARENT'S VIEW



## Best Fit

- only nipple pulled into tunnel
- sides of nipple touch walls of tunnel
- nipple moves a little bit back and forth in tunnel
- milk sprays during pumping
- best to pump 15-20 minutes (both sides at same time)
- feels like nothing or a gentle tug

## Too Large

- might hurt
- might get less milk or more drips than sprays
- nipple might move side to side in tunnel
- pumping might take a long time
- more chance for nipple swelling and damage
- areola goes into tunnel and can swell
- outdated recommendations will indicate this as best fit; newer clinical evidence finds this too large

## Much Too Large

# Finally, the flange FITS™!

How to pump to get the most milk out in the shortest amount of time with the most comfort.

**F Feel** of the flange (size, shape, material)

**I Intensity** of the pump (vacuum pressure/pull)

**T Tempo** of the pump (cycle speed, rhythm, vibration)

**S Supply** of milk (drips, dribbles; strong sprays are ideal)

Measure nipple before pumping to estimate flange size.

areola

nipple



1 cm = 10mm. Flange sizes are in mm.

**Pumping should be comfortable: it should feel like nothing or a gentle tug.**

## Feel

**Which flange size, shape or material is the most comfortable (but also gets out the most milk)?**

Often, a flange that is closest to the actual size of the nipple feels best (and gets the most milk out). Start by measuring the tip of each nipple (left can be different than right). Gently touch/tug the nipple to help it stick out a bit. Measure how wide the nipple tip is, using a tool with centimeters (cm) or millimeters (mm). Start with 0 next to one edge of the nipple tip. Turn on the pump on a low vacuum/intensity level and try pumping with 2 or 3 hard plastic flange sizes: one a little smaller than the nipple, one about the same size, and one a little bigger than the nipple. The flange that usually feels best is the one where the sides of the nipple touch the sides of the flange tunnel and the nipple gently glides a little bit back and forth. It should also be comfortable and milk should come out easily. If a flange is too big, it may hurt, make the nipple get bigger than it usually is (swollen) and less milk will come out during pumping. If the flange is too small, the nipple will not move easily in the tunnel and less/no milk comes out of the nipple. A thin layer of coconut oil on the bend of the flange can increase comfort. Pumping should feel good and get plenty of milk out!

## Intensity

**How strongly does the pump pull on the nipple?**

The intensity of a pump's vacuum pressure (the pull of the nipple into the flange tunnel) depends on the pump. Not all pumps are the same. Not all pumping parents need a strong pull when pumping. Once milk starts spraying and there is complete comfort, stay on that vacuum level and play with the tempo. Increase the intensity of the pull during the pumping session if it is comfortable and you see more milk sprays. Remember, pumping should be comfortable from start to finish—it should not be something to “tolerate”. Nipples should feel good when the pumping session is done and the size of the nipple (width) should be about the same as before pumping (but the nipple may be longer after pumping).

## Tempo

**What is the best tempo of the pump?**

The one that helps the most milk come out. The tempo is not only the speed, or cycle, but also the rhythm. Some pumps have simple tempos and others have options. Think of tempo like music for dance. Some tempos are faster and some are slower. Some start fast, go slow for a moment and then speed up again. See what works best for your body with the pump you have. Some pumps have more of a pull-release rhythm and others have more of a vibration with rhythm. Start pumping on the fastest tempo/cycle/speed and after milk is coming out for 20-30 seconds, change to a slower tempo/cycle/speed—more sprays should come out. If sprays stop at some point during the pumping session (typically 15-20 minutes is a standard pumping time for most people), then change the tempo back to faster for 1-2 minutes and then back to slower again. There are people who stay on a faster tempo the entire pumping session—play with the tempo/cycle/speed to discover what best to get the most milk out but with comfort. There are also pumping parents who need to find a different pump that works better for their body.

## Supply

**How much milk should someone get when pumping?**

The answer depends on many factors but the goal is to see sprays of milk during pumping. Drips and dribbles are fine for part of a pumping session but, ideally, sprays would be seen/heard for most of the pumping session. Many people find they get the most milk when they have the best flange fit. Many pumping parents also say that when they have the best flange fit, they get the same amount or more milk in a shorter amount of time than when pumping with flanges that are too large. Two other activities that help get more milk out: hands-on pumping during pumping and hand expression of milk after pumping. Keep in mind that the left side may make more or less milk than the right (call the one that makes more milk the bonus boob!). It's also normal to get more milk in the morning hours. If you want to make more milk overall, it's best to seek out help from a lactation professional who specializes in pumping and milk supply.

**The flange that fits closest to the actual nipple size usually works best.**

**No areola should be in the flange tunnel. The sides of the nipple should touch the sides of the tunnel, but the nipple should glide gently and comfortably back and forth.**



**What about silicone flanges and inserts?**

For those seeking to get more milk during pump sessions but who want to try silicone inserts or silicone flanges, it is best to try hard plastic flanges first to find the ideal size for each nipple. Then try silicone flanges and/or inserts and see how the comfort and amount of milk pumped compares to using the best fitting hard flange. Many people find that they get more milk with a hard flange that is the best size and they are completely comfortable.

**Note:** Flanges can be as small as 10mm and as large as 36mm. There are flanges available from various companies in different sizes, materials and even different shapes. Finding the best flange fit can take time. It is like finding the right pair of shoes...we need to try them on to figure out what feels best.

**Need help?** Find a lactation professional who has experience observing pumping sessions with varied flange options—they can do an in-person or video meeting to help find the best flange FITS™ for you. If you have questions or want help finding someone near you who can help with flange fitting, email [jeanette@babiesincommon.com](mailto:jeanette@babiesincommon.com).

The Flange FITS™ Guide by Jeanette Mesite Frem MHS, IBCLC, RLC, CCE  
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Nikki Lee RN, BSN, MS, IBCLC, RLC, CCE, editing assistance  
Stephanie Audette Connor, graphic designer