

Women's Hospital

Caring for Your Breast Pump Equipment

Most mothers who provide milk for their neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) babies need to use a breast pump. Germs that are all around us—at home and in the NICU—can grow in the breast pump equipment and must be removed with careful cleaning. **So it is very important that all of the pump pieces that touch your milk are cleaned completely after each breast pump use so that germs do not get into your baby's milk.**

Follow these steps each time you clean your breast pump equipment. **You also should sterilize your breast pump equipment once each day** to remove germs that may escape hand-cleaning. **Always wash your hands carefully with warm water and soap before touching your clean equipment and take care not to cough or sneeze on it once it is cleaned.**

What cleaning supplies do I need to wash my breast pump equipment?

You will need a dishwashing (not dishwasher) detergent, hot water and a baby bottle brush (figure 1). You also need a tiny brush that will reach into the narrow openings of the breast shield section of the pump. Most bottle brushes have a smaller brush built into the brush handle (figure 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2

Which parts of the breast pump equipment should I clean?

You should clean everything that touches the milk. (These pieces are shown in figure 3.) You do not need to clean the tubing pieces or the part that attaches the tubing to the breast pump.



Figure 3

What steps should I use to clean my breast pump equipment?

Always wash your breast pump equipment separately from the family dishes and food preparation items. Use hot, soapy water that has not been used to wash other dishes. Follow these steps each time you clean your equipment:

- Rinse equipment in cold water to remove the milk residue
- Using hot water and detergent, scrub the equipment with the large and small bottle brushes
- Take extra care to clean hard-to-reach areas, including ...
 - The tunnel part of the breast shield (scrub inside with the bottle brush) (figure 4)
 - The little grooves in the part that holds the breast shield (figure 5)
 - The part of the breast shield attachment that holds the tiny white plastic diaphragm (figure 6)
- Rinse all of the parts with warm water, making sure to remove all of the soap
- Place the parts on a clean paper towel and cover them with another paper towel: Let them air dry

NOTE: While your baby is in the hospital, bottles should **not be** washed or reused.

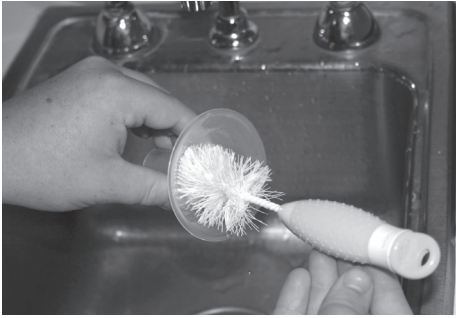


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

How do I sterilize my breast pump equipment once a day?

Your breast pump equipment can be sterilized daily by putting it into a dishwasher that has a special hot-water sanitizing cycle or by boiling the pieces in a large pot for about 15 minutes. If you have a microwave at home, you also can use the special sanitizing bags by Medela, Inc., (shown below). Each bag can be reused for 20 separate microwavings. Just ask your baby's nurse to provide you with a bag for your at-home use.

Follow these steps when using the sanitizing bags:

- Wash your equipment, as described previously
- Then place all of the pump parts that you have washed into the bag except the white membrane (figure 7)
- Add two ounces of water to the bag and close it securely
- Place it into the microwave and set the timer according to the instructions on the bag (timing varies with type of microwave) (figure 8)
- **When the microwave finishes, remove the bag using insulated mitts or potholders because the contents in the bag are hot: Be careful not to spill the hot water on your skin**
- **Use tongs and potholders to handle the bag and pump parts, as shown below** (figure 9)
- Remove the pump parts and place them between two paper towels to air dry

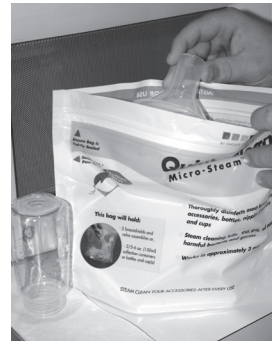


Figure 7

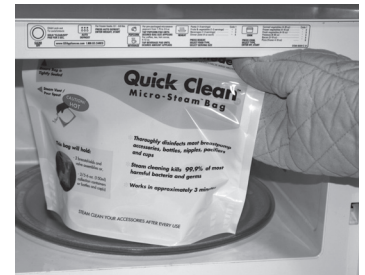


Figure 8



Figure 9