

Breast Pump Flange

Using a breast pump should not be painful, however pumping discomfort can be caused by the flange. The flange (also called a breast shield or horn) is the part of the pump that is placed directly onto the breast.

Babies do not “nipple feed”, they breastfeed, placing all of the nipple and some breast tissue in their mouths for a correct latch. Likewise, a breast pump should not pump only the nipple.

It is important to use a properly fitting flange. Flanges come in different sizes. Just as one size shoe does not fit all feet, one size flange does not fit all nursing moms. If you have the wrong size flange, you may:

- Experience pain and nipple soreness
- Pump less milk



Most pump kits include a “standard” size flange which works well for many women. However, some women need a larger or smaller size, and a few may need a different size flange for each breast.

Correct fit

Look at your breast and nipple while pumping:

- The nipple should move freely and easily inside the tunnel
- The nipple should not rub against the sides
- A little of the breast tissue should be drawn into the tunnel but not a large amount
- The breast should feel soft after pumping

Flange may be too small if:

- The nipple rubs against the sides of the tunnel
- Blanching of the nipple
- The nipple is pinching or painful
- Only part of the nipple fits inside the tunnel
- The tissue gets “stuck” in the tunnel preventing suction
- The breast does not feel emptied after pumping

Flange may be too large if:

- A large amount of breast tissue is drawn into the tunnel
- The tissue “pops” back and forth instead of sliding in and out
- The breast does not feel emptied after pumping

The Lactation Center, WIC, hospitals, medical supply places and some stores have different size flanges.

Contact the Eden Park Pediatrics Lactation Center to help you choose your correct size.