EXPRESSED BREASTMILK – CLEANING OF LACTATION AIDS IN POSTNATAL AREAS

This LOP is developed to guide clinical practice at the Royal Hospital for Women. Individual patient circumstances may mean that practice diverges from this LOP.

- **AIM**
  - Equipment used for the collection and feeding of expressed breastmilk to breastfed babies is cleaned and stored in a manner that will decrease the risk of bacterial contamination

- **PATIENT**
  - Woman collecting and using expressed breastmilk
  - Baby receiving expressed breastmilk

- **STAFF**
  - Registered midwives
  - Registered nurses
  - Student midwives

- **EQUIPMENT**
  - Breast pump kits
  - Bottle brush
  - Spoons
  - Cups
  - Nipple shields

- **CLINICAL PRACTICE**
  - Ensure all equipment used is single patient use only
  - Perform hand hygiene (woman and staff) as per NSW Health policy before handling any equipment
  - Demonstrate and discuss cleaning practices of equipment with the woman according to items utilised
  - Encourage woman to clean equipment thoroughly immediately after use
  - Confirm maternal comprehension and compliance through observance of at least one cleaning procedure
  - Document in integrated clinical notes

Breast pump kits, Cups, spoons and nipple shields:
- Dismantle breast pump kits into separate parts
- Rinse well in cold water any parts of equipment that have come into contact with the breast and milk
- Clean equipment thoroughly using a surfactant (e.g. dishwashing liquid) and a designated bottle brush
- Rinse all parts well twice in clear warm water
- Place equipment upside down on new paper towel and cover with further paper towel while they dry
- Use a clean paper towel to dry equipment, if water droplets remain
- Store dry equipment in a clean container with a lid, in a dry, clean plastic bag or under more clean paper towel until next usage
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cont’d

Discharge education
- Provide woman with relevant written information3 (see Appendix 1) if she is being discharged from hospital expressing and providing breastmilk
  - Provide additional information on other sterilising methods if the woman is likely to be using infant formula as well

- DOCUMENTATION
  - Integrated clinical notes
  - ObstetriX
  - Neonatal Care Pathway

- EDUCATIONAL NOTES
  - Contaminated breastfeeding equipment and attachments pose a potential risk to the newborn2
  - Thoroughly cleaning breastfeeding equipment immediately after use decreases the risk of bacterial growth that may be more resistant to hygiene measures attended later
  - According to a recent systematic review4 there are no high quality studies to suggest that basic hygiene measures such as thorough hand-washing, cleaning of equipment and a clean water supply are not sufficient to prevent contamination of feeding equipment compared to traditional “sterilisation” methods.
  - Recommendations for cleaning breastfeeding equipment and attachments by washing rather than “sterilisation” have been made for hospital use5, 6 and home use2 without any adverse effects reported

- RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / CLINICAL PRACTICE LOP
  - NSW Health PD2010_058 Hand Hygiene Policy
  - Breastfeeding – Protection, Promotion and Support
  - Supplementary Feeding of Breastfed Babies

- REFERENCES
  3. SESIAHS Handout 2009 “Preparing Artificial Formula Feeds, Sterilising Bottles and Teats” (create hyperlink)

REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY
Approved Quality & Patient Safety Committee 21/6/12
Endorsed Obstetric LOP Group May 2012
Appendix 1

Excerpt from ABA Handout “Suggestions on using an electric breast pump”

Cleaning Information

Here are some important points about cleaning your equipment. Please note that cleaning well is important when using your pump kit and bottles. Note that you must clean your new kit before the first use. If your baby is in hospital or is ill, be guided about extra cleaning by your medical advisers.

Care of your breast pump kit

If you are the only person to use your breast pump kit, you are expressing several times a day and if your baby is healthy, breast pump kit parts should be:

1. Rinsed well in cold water after each use to remove surface milk. Store in a clean, closed container OR the kit can be stored unrinsed in a closed container in a fridge.
2. Cleaned well once a day when in frequent use, or after each use if used only occasionally.

How to clean well

1. First wash your hands well, with soap, and dry them on new paper towel or a clean, unused cloth towel.
2. Take the breast pump kit apart, and separate all pieces. Rinse in cold water all the parts that have been in contact with your milk.
3. Take care to remove all traces of grease, milk and dirt with a small amount of dishwashing liquid and hot water. Use a brush kept only for this purpose.
4. Rinse all parts in hot water, at least twice.
5. Drain bottles and containers upside-down on new paper towel and cover with more paper towel while they air dry. Finish drying all containers with new paper towel before putting away. Store the dry kit in a new plastic bag, plastic wrap, more paper towel or clean, covered container until next use.

Suggested reading
