

Nursing and pumping milk

Nursing a baby is permitted

Nursing a baby in the normal way is permitted, and it involves no prohibition at all (*Shulḥan Arukh* 328:35). This is not considered Extracting, but part of the process of eating. A mother may even help the baby by pressing on her breast (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited by *Megillat Sefer* 7:5).

Expressing milk into a vessel is prohibited by Torah law

In contrast to the above, expressing breast milk **into a vessel** is prohibited. The *Beur Halakha* writes in the name of the *Peri Megadim* that this action is prohibited by Torah law, due to Extracting (328:34).

In a case of need it is permitted to express milk if it goes to waste

A woman who is in pain due to surplus milk in her breasts or who wants to express milk in order to maintain her ability to nurse

6. For more on this issue, see e.g., *Tehumin* 7, pp. 144–156 (Rav U. Dasberg); ad loc., pp. 157–173 (Rav S. David); *Tehumin* 11, pp. 170–175 (Rav S. Rosenfeld); *Tehumin* 15, pp. 393–400 (Rav U. Dasberg); ad loc., pp. 401–410 (Rav Z. Weitman).

(see Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited in *Meor HaShabbat* 1, pp. 504–505) may pump milk and let it go **to waste** (*Shulḥan Arukh* 328:35). This is achieved, for example, by pumping the milk directly into the sink or into a container which contains a small quantity of a substance that ruins the milk's taste (e.g., soap). She is also permitted to use a breast pump, either a manual pump, or an electric pump which was turned on before Shabbat or which is operated by a timer, provided that there is an unpalatable substance in the container that receives the milk, as above.

A nursing woman may not express milk into a vessel for her baby to drink later unless the baby is incapable of nursing and cannot consume milk substitutes, and therefore needs the milk. Clearly, the mother may not express milk on Shabbat in order to free herself for other pursuits during the week. As stated, this entails a prohibition by Torah law.

Expressing milk for use is permitted only if there is no alternative food

IN CONCLUSION, milking on Shabbat is prohibited according to most authorities by **Torah law** due to the prohibition of **Extracting**, which is a subcategory of **Threshing**. Kibbutzim and agricultural settlements initially employed a **non-Jew** to milk on Shabbat. When this became unworkable in practice, the halakhic authorities permitted them to milk, with the milk going **to waste**. Some wanted to permit milking by a Jew, but this was not the accepted opinion. Another solution was to milk directly onto bread (Kefar Haroeh). This issue has inspired numerous discussions and controversies, as it raised many difficulties for the Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael. A revolution in this regard began after the establishment of the State of Israel with the advent of the **electric milking machine**. In this method, the first milk that emerged went to waste, after which the machine would operate on its own. This was the practice in Kibbutz Hafetz Haim, in accordance with the opinion of the *Hazon Ish*. Nowadays, there is another solution, in accordance with the principle of **causation**. These solutions enable the observance of Shabbat with Jews doing the milking without suffering major financial losses.

Summary

Nursing a baby is permitted. Expressing breast milk into an **empty**

vessel is prohibited by Torah law according to the opinion of many halakhic authorities. If the mother is in pain due to excess milk, she may express the milk, provided that it goes **to waste**. If the baby is unable to nurse or consume milk substitutes, she is permitted to express the milk for the baby to drink, although one should consult a rabbi in these situations as to the best manner in which to do this. In other situations, it is prohibited to express milk.

