Early modern mothers did not like to breastfeed. Many young mothers did not produce enough, suffered from sore nipples, or they wanted to be liberated from this time-consuming practice and fulfill their social and sexual duties. Yet on the basis of medical and chemical studies, physicians were passionately convinced of the benefits of milk and maternal breastfeeding. This paper argues that 18th century physicians developed new strategies to remedy this widespread antipathy against mother’s milk. Besides applying rhetoric in poems and popular how-to books, doctors promoted maternal breastfeeding by developing new galactagogues (drugs that increased lactation) and innovative breast pumps.

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