

# Expressing milk for your baby

## Why should I express milk?

Your baby has arrived and you want to express milk. You can still breastfeed - this will help you to get your supply going. Breastmilk provides essential protection and perfect food for your baby helping them to develop and grow well.

## When should I express?

Ideally start straight away (within three hours of birth). Your body has been getting ready to feed your baby since 16 weeks into your pregnancy. Now you need to help your body start to make milk.

Making milk is based on supply and demand. The more milk you ask for the more milk you will make, so feeding one, two, three or more babies is possible. The most important thing is to fully drain the breasts as often as possible (ideally 10-12 times in 24 hours) including night time.

Expressing little and often is best, just like a new baby would feed at the breast.

## How do I express?

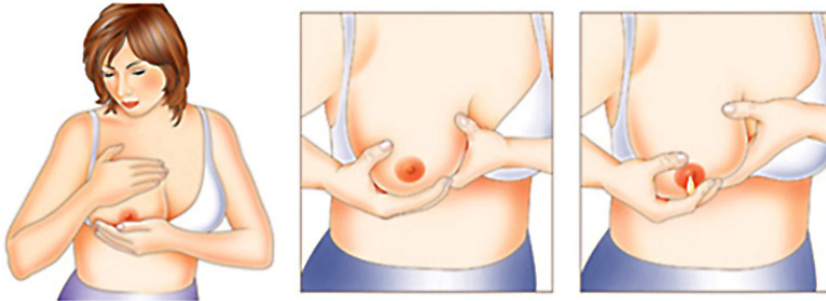
Expressing your milk is a way of getting breastmilk from your breasts. This can be done with hand expression or hands-on-pumping.

**Hand expression** (ask your Care Provider for additional help):

- 1) **Firstly get comfortable**, try to be near your baby (at the cot side) or have something of theirs with you. A back massage can often help to get your milk flowing.
- 2) **Warm the breast** with your flat hand and roll your nipple.



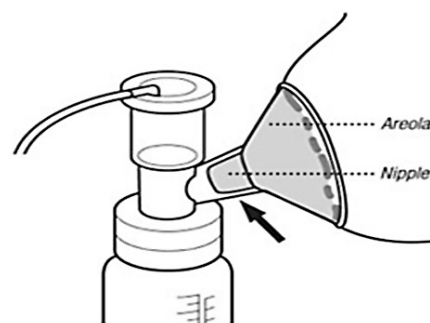
- 3) **Massage the breast gently;** use your fingers to make raindrops/pitter patter on your breast. Holding your hand flat, gently roll fingers from outer edge towards your areola (dark area with nipple). Don't drag the skin.
- 4) **Place your fingers in a C shape** about 2-3 cm back from areola (size of babies mouth).



- 5) **Gently squeeze and release,** a small amount of milk may appear after a couple of minutes. Be patient - this may take more time, this is normal.
- 6) **Move your C shape round the breast,** it has many segments like an orange and you need to drain them all. Do both breasts.
- 7) **The first milk (colostrum) is thicker** and every drop can be put in a syringe, as your milk changes you may need bigger containers.
- 8) **Breastmilk is thick** so you may need to lean forward and give a little shake to encourage the milk down.

### Using a pump (ask your Care Provider for additional help)

- 1) **Check you have all you need:** collection set (correct size/alternative size sets available from manufacturer), container to collect milk, something that belongs to baby, breast pads, breast pump.
- 2) **Get comfortable:** it is best to be close to your baby but if that is not possible a photo or piece of clothing may help.
- 3) **Warm the breasts with your hand:** rain drops/pitter patter, rolling and pinching the nipple gently all help the breast get ready and start the milk making process.
- 4) **Use hand expression** to get your milk flowing.
- 5) **Once your milk is flowing,** place the collection set onto the breasts, ensure correct fit; nipple should have a small gap around the base of it.



Pumping should mimic a baby's suckle, so start with a low suction and high cycle then lower the cycles and increase the suction. It should not be painful. If it is, ask your Care Provider for help. Double pumping increases the fat content of your milk as does resting your hands on your breast as you pump. Once milk flow is very slow, do some gentle hand expression to fully drain the breasts as the thicker milk can stick in the breast.

## How much should I express?

Each baby is unique and the amount of milk a baby needs will vary. It is important to work hard on your milk supply as the more you can express the more easily you will keep up with your baby's growth.

Remember, in the early days even a few drops is 'liquid gold'. Your milk supply may dip when you are stressed or worried. Just keep going, don't worry about how much, just focus on how often.

## Summary

Babies need time to grow and the amount of milk they need over this time will vary. Drain your breasts well 10-12 times in 24 hours, at least once in the night (when your hormones are highest).

Try to do this for at least the first four weeks after your baby arrives.

**Most importantly:** every tiny bit of breastmilk makes a difference.

Expression number (up to 12 per day)	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
1	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
2	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
3	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
4	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
5	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
6	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
7	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
8	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
9	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
10	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
11	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml
12	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml	ml

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net)

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