

What you need to know about expressing breastmilk before your baby is born.

Did you know you can hand express and collect first breast milk called colostrum before your baby is born?



Antenatal expression means expressing colostrum before your baby is born. You can start expressing from 36 to 37 weeks pregnant.



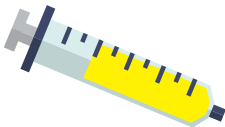
Antenatal expression is particularly useful if you are diabetic, are having a planned caesarean, are having twins or triplets, know your baby is going to be born early or you have a medical condition like high blood pressure.



You can hand express 2 to 3 times a day for about 5 to 10 minutes. Don't worry if you don't get much-expressing now can help your milk supply increase sooner when baby is born.



If your pregnancy is consultant led giving this extra milk may reduce the risk of baby being admitted to the neonatal unit.



We can provide you with 1ml syringes and bungs to collect milk in. Use a small sterile container if milk volumes increase. You can add milk to the same syringe for up to 24 hours in the fridge before storing in the freezer.

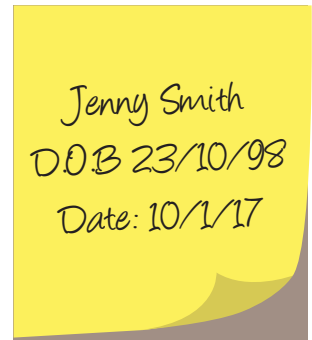
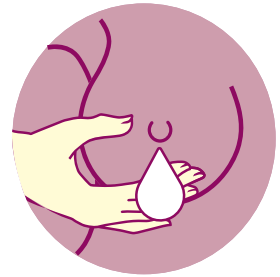


Unless you have a planned date to have your baby leave your colostrum at home and ask someone to bring it in when baby is born as it cannot be kept frozen in hospital.

Very occasionally expressing can stimulate mild contractions. If these occur each time you express stop expressing and contact your midwife for further information.

How to hand express:

1. Gently massage your breast & nipple.
2. Position your thumb & fingers in a 'C' shape about 2-3cm from the base of the nipple.
3. To express, gently compress & release, compress & release and repeat until your colostrum begins to flow.
4. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin.
5. You may only get very small drops but that is normal. When your baby is born their tummy is small and this is extra milk.
6. When the milk flow slows down or stops, move your fingers round your breast and repeat. Then move to the next breast.
7. Label your milk with your name, your date of birth and the date you expressed. Store milk in the freezer until you need it. Use within 24 hours of taking out the freezer and store in the fridge.
8. Bring your colostrum into hospital in a cool bag with ice block and give to your midwife to store in the postnatal ward fridge.



For more information on how to express watch this film:
<http://www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly/Resources/AudioVideo/Hand-expression/>

Your milk supply will increase once your baby is born, Usually around day 3-4