

Maternity

Hand expression, Skin to skin and Kangaroo care



What does 'expressing milk' mean?

- Expressing milk means removal of milk from your breast.
- You can express milk by hand, with a hand pump or an electric pump.
- Different pumps suit different needs, so ask for information to compare them.
- Equipment needs to be clean and sterilised each time it is used.

Why express milk?

Massaging your breasts gently and expressing a few drops of colostrum (first milk) immediately after birth for a few minutes, and for every missed attempt to breastfeed helps in several ways:

- Locating your milk ducts needed for effective removal of breast milk will help improve the technique and therefore effectiveness.
- Produces hormones (Prolactin and Oxytocin) responsible for making your milk
- Kick-starts your milk supply to make sure future production
- Encourages milk flow, which entices the baby to initiate a feed



Patient Information

Regular expression may be needed later:

- If your baby is premature, ill, not feeding well or your breasts are uncomfortably full.
- It can also be useful if considering continuing breastfeeding when you return to work.

It is best to wait until your breastfeeding is established before regularly expressing milk for someone else to feed your baby, unless your baby is in Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) or otherwise unable to feed at the breast.

Why massage and express by hand?

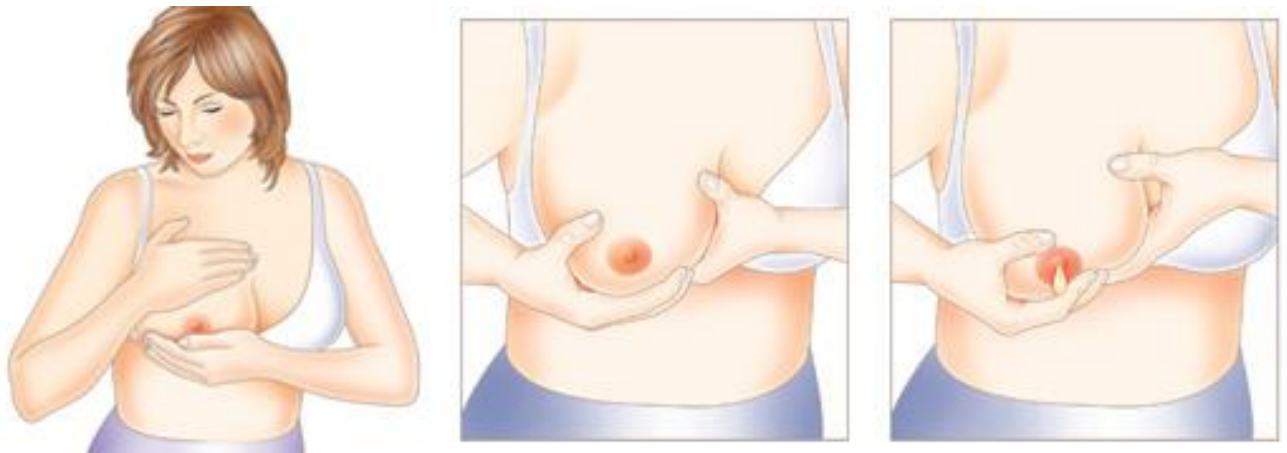
- If your breasts feel uncomfortably full
- If your baby isn't sucking well but you still want to give your baby mum's milk or baby is in Special Care or Neonatal Unit.
- If you don't want to buy or use a pump to express milk
- In the first few days it is often easier and more effective to express by hand

How to express milk by hand

1. Wash your hands
2. Have a clean sterilised container ready before you start. Gently massage the breast to stimulate and to increase hormone levels which will encourage the milk supply.
3. Cup your breast and feel back from the end of the nipple to where the texture of your breast feels different. This is often where the areola meets the lighter skin.
4. Using your thumb and index finger, form a C shape and gently compress this area - this shouldn't hurt.
5. Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. At first, only a drop will appear, but just keep going as it will help build up your supply. With practice and a little more time, milk will flow freely.
6. When the flow slows down, move your fingers round to try a different section of your breast and repeat. When that flow slows down, swap to the other breast. Keep changing breast until the milk is dripping very slowly or stops altogether.

Patient Information

7. If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away, and try a gentle breast massage.



Storage

- Remember to use a sterilised container to put the milk in.
- You can store mum's milk in the fridge for up to 5 days at 4 degrees C or lower (usually at the back, **never in the door**).
- Mum's milk can be stored for 12 weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to 6 months in the freezer.
- Defrost frozen mum's milk in the fridge. Once thawed, use it straight away. Do not re-freeze.
- If your baby prefers, you can warm the milk up to body temperature before feeding. Never heat milk in the microwave as it can cause hot spots which can burn your baby's mouth.
- Unused milk should be discarded after each feed.

Skin to skin contact / Kangaroo care (Special care babies)

What is it?

This means direct skin on skin contact with your baby. Can be done by both mums and dads

Patient Information

Benefits of skin-to-skin contact

It helps baby to:-

- Maintain their temperature
- Regulate their heart rate and breathing
- Increases their weight gain
- Keep calm and remain more settled
- Improve their brain development
- Combat infections and reduces pain responses
- Stimulate milk production



Skin to skin contact reduces stress levels for mums and dads too

How to do skin to skin

- Sit comfortably
- Wear something loose with front opening
- The baby should be naked apart from nappy and hat
- Nurse/ Midwives will help with positioning the baby
- The baby needs to be in an upright position
- Staff will advise you what position is most comfortable for you and your baby
- Secure with clothes or blanket
- Lean back and enjoy the cuddle time

Talk to your baby, stroke him/her, make eye-contact, remain relaxed and calm (baby will take your cues).

Useful Contact Numbers

National Breastfeeding Helpline

0300 100 0212

www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk

Patient Information

NCT Breastfeeding Line

0300 330 0771

www.nct.org.uk

La Leche League

0845 120 2918

www.laleche.org.uk

Coventry Peer Support Team

07904 984620

02476 788483

Baby Centre

www.babycentre.co.uk

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please ask ward staff and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Document History

Department:	Maternity
Contact:	26580
Updated:	September 2021
Review:	September 2024
Version:	2.2
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1583/13