

Maternity

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 weeks pregnant.

Antenatal expression of colostrum is particularly useful if you:

- Are diabetic,
- have a planned caesarean,
- are having twins or triplets,
- know your baby is going to be born early,
- have a medical condition like high blood pressure.

You can hand express 2 to 3 times a day for about 5 to 10 minutes at a time. Do not worry if you don't get much, expressing now may 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 colostrum packs which contain information and 1ml syringes and caps to collect milk in. You can add milk to the same syringe for up to 24 hours in the fridge before storing in the freezer.



Patient Information

When you come to hospital to have your baby by elective caesarean section, bring your colostrum with you in a cool bag with a cool block inside and hand it to your midwife who will store it in our milk fridge until baby needs it. If you are attending for a planned induction of labour ask your birth partner to bring in any antenatal colostrum when baby is born. Here at UHCW there are no freezer facilities and we do not wish for your EBM to defrost too quickly. We only store expressed breastmilk in our designated EBM fridge for 48 hours.

Very occasionally expressing can stimulate mild contractions. If these occur each time you express, stop expressing and contact your midwife for more 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, 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, the date and the time 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.

For more information on how to express watch this film via the following link or by searching online for 'Baby Friendly Hand Expression':

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/hand-expression-video/>

Your milk supply will increase once your baby is born; this is usually around day 3 - 4.

Patient Information

Further information

In addition to the feeding support available directly from your Midwife or Health Visitor here is the local support available for families in Coventry and Warwickshire:

UHCW Infant Feeding Specialist Midwife: 024 7696 4000 ext. 26580

Coventry Infant Feeding Team for areas CV1 - CV6: 07904 984620

Early Breastfeeding Support Service for parents in Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire: 01926 626529.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or formats please contact 024 7696 4000 ext. 26580 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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