

Be kind to yourself



- Some days may be harder than others. On these days do what you can to relax and look after yourself.
- Spending time in skin contact/kangaroo care (see below) with your baby will help you both relax and it can also help increase the hormones that make and deliver milk.
- When you can't be close to your baby, think about how you felt having skin-to-skin. Having something that smells of your baby can help too.
- Have a snack and our expressing equipment ready by the bedside. Expressing at night may feel like a big interruption to your sleep. However, for your milk supply, it is really important to express overnight, at least once.
- Have a water bottle handy when you're expressing to keep hydrated
- Take it a day at a time and try not to make decisions when you are feeling frustrated or exhausted.
- Help us to help you by letting us know when you are feeling low or discouraged.

Further information

If you have any questions please speak to the neonatal nurse or midwife or ask to speak to the Specialist Infant Feeding Team.

Breastfeeding helplines and websites

National Breastfeeding helpline: 0300 100 0212 Association of Breastfeeding Mothers 0300 330 5453 www.abm.me.uk
Breastfeeding Network www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk
La Leche League: 0345 120 2918 www.laleche.org.uk

YOUR GUIDE TO EARLY BREASTMILK EXPRESSING

Expressing milk for your baby on the Neonatal Unit



In this leaflet, you will find:

1. Why breastmilk is so important for babies
2. Information on early milk expressing
3. Hints on how to achieve good results with expressing



Give your baby the gift of golden drops

The breastmilk you produce for your baby is unique. Research shows that the earlier you start and the more often you express, the more milk you will produce for your baby. This is really important, especially in the first few weeks.

The value of your breastmilk

If your baby is born prematurely or is sick, **breast milk is like “medicine”** that only you can provide.

Colostrum is the early breast milk that your body makes during the first few days after giving birth and **helps protect your baby**, especially from infection.

Your breastmilk is **easier for your baby to digest** and **lowers** the chance of a serious bowel condition called necrotising enterocolitis. Your breastmilk also **protects** your baby's lungs, eyes and brain from the complications of being born prematurely.

Every drop of breastmilk your baby receives **will give them the best possible start in life.**

You can decide at a later date if you wish to carry on breastfeeding or express in the longer term.

Even if I'm not able to feed yet,
I enjoy the taste of the small
amounts of mummy's milk in my
mouth



What to expect when expressing?

- The first milk in your breasts, colostrum, is produced in small amounts so colostrum syringes can be used to collect this milk.
- Breastmilk supply gradually **increases** in the first 10 to 14 days.
- By day 10, aim to express 750 ml per baby in every 24 hours. Once this volume is reached, it is considered a full supply.
- Breastmilk is produced 'on demand' so the more frequently you express the more milk your breasts will produce.
- In the first few days when you express it is common to produce only drops of milk. Don't be discouraged as it normally takes 2-4 days for your milk to come in after you start expressing.
- Even a single drop of colostrum can be given to protect your baby.

How to express using a pump

- 1 **Breast massage**
Start off by encouraging your milk to flow – being near your baby will help. Start by gently massaging your breast and nipple **for 1 minute** to stimulate the hormones needed to release milk.
- 2 **Always double pump**
When using the breast pump it is helpful to express from both breasts at the same time.
It saves time and research shows it increases the amount of milk by 18%!
- 3 **A good fit is important**
Breast funnels (the part of the collection kit that fits over your breast) fit well. This is so that expressing is comfortable and can also help with your milk supply. If your milk volumes are not increasing ask your midwife if you can try another size.
- 4 **We are here to help you get it right**
Getting milk production off to a good start happens in the first 14 days of your baby's life. Ask our experienced staff for help with expressing. We are here for you.

Top tips for successful expressing and milk supply

1. Begin expressing within an hour of birth or at the latest by 2 hours. Your midwife can help you express if you are not feeling ready.

2. Continue expressing at least 8-10 times in 24 hours, including at least once overnight as this is when your milk production hormone called prolactin is at its highest.

3. Before you start expressing try: breast massage, relaxation, skin contact, being close to your baby, smelling something belonging to your baby, or having a photograph as this will help you release your milk.

4. With each day the amount of milk you express should increase. If this does not happen, ask our experienced staff for help.

5. For longer-term expressing: Fit in the timings to work around your lifestyle, but try not to have gaps of any longer than 4 hours (daytime) and 6 hours (night time) and once between midnight and 5 am.