

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.



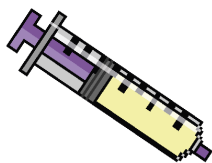
Antenatal expression is particularly useful if you have diabetes, have a planned caesarean, are having twins or triplets, know your baby is going to be born early or you have a medical condition like high blood pressure.



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 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.



Bring in fresh colostrum when you come in to have baby, give it to your midwife on arrival. Leave frozen colostrum at home, it can be brought in later if baby needs it.



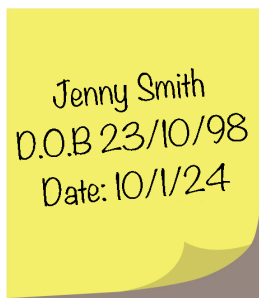
Unless you have a planned date to have your baby, leave your colostrum at home and ask someone to bring them in when baby is born if you need them as milk cannot be kept frozen in hospital. You can bring in fresh colostrum, hand it to your midwife to put in the fridge when you arrive.

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

If you buy your own colostrum syringes: Get syringes with tethered or screw on caps. Don't use syringes with push on caps as they are a choking hazard.

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, the date and the time you expressed. Store milk in the freezer until you need it. Defrost colostrum or breast milk in the fridge. Once defrosted colostrum should be stored in the fridge and used or discarded after 24 hours.



Video on
expressing your
milk before your
baby is born



Video on how to
hand express



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

You can contact the Infant Feeding Team on ☎01902 695578 or search 'Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Infant Feeding Team'.
'You and Your Baby Wolverhampton':

Reference www.rcm.org.uk