

Hand Expression

Using your hands to express and collect colostrum is a good way to feed baby extra milk in the first few days of life. This is also a good way to increase your milk supply. Hand expression also helps with breast fullness, clear a blocked duct and relieve engorgement. Expressed milk can be stored for use later.

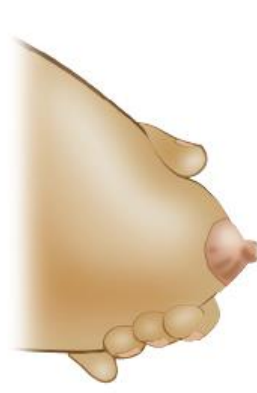
1. Before hand expression, wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Milk flows best when you are comfortable and relaxed.
3. Apply warm face cloths to your breast for a couple minutes. Gently massage the breast working slowly around the entire breast in a circular motion. This helps the milk to flow.
4. Make a "C" around your breast with your thumb and fingers. The thumb and fingers should be opposite each other and about 1- 1 ½ inches back from the nipple.
5. **Press, Compress, Relax**
 - a. **Press** back towards the chest
 - b. **Compress** the thumb and fingers together
 - c. **Relax** fingers for up to a couple seconds. Then repeat Press, Compress, Relax.



Press



Compress



Relax

6. Move around the breast in order to empty the entire breast.
7. Switch sides often.
8. **Consider that it may take a few minutes for the milk to start flowing.**
9. Continue this until the flow of milk has stopped. It will probably take 10-15 minutes per breast to remove most of the milk from each breast.
10. Collect your milk to store or feed to baby.

**Scan this QR Code to view a
hand expression video**



SCAN ME

If your baby is in NICU...

While in the NICU, your baby may not be ready to go to the breast to feed. It is important that you begin to express your breastmilk as soon as possible, with hand expression and the use of *double electric pump*, this may be referred to as “**hands-on pumping**”. This will help you increase your milk making capacity, as well as maintain your breastmilk supply. You will be shown how to use a double electric breast pump while in NICU and you can ask your bedside nurse questions about it.

How to use this kit

- Wash your hands
- While in the post-partum unit, collect drops of your first milk (colostrum) into this cup using hand expression or while using an electric pump
- **Please see the other side of this page for tips on hand expression**
- Put the milk in the syringe provided and label it with:
 - date & time you pumped/expressed
 - Your baby’s first & last name & birthdate
 - Your initials
- Bring the milk to the NICU - If you or your support person can’t do it, talk to your nurse about having it sent to the NICU. NICU will prioritize using your milk.

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Ask the NICU nurse or Unit Clerk for pre-printed labels with your baby's name and birthdate.

Hand express and pump every 2-4 hours while your baby is in the hospital

Scan this QR Code to view a video about hands-on pumping



Scan this QR Code to learn more about breastmilk in the NICU at the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation

