

Antenatal Expressing

Getting started

Why should I collect colostrum (the first milk) before my baby is born?

- Breastmilk, especially colostrum protects your baby's immune system, enhances gut health and aids brain development
- If it is anticipated that your baby may experience difficulties with feeding after birth or maintaining their blood sugar, baby can be given colostrum collected antenatally. For example, if you have Diabetes

When should I start?

- Hand expressing of colostrum/breastmilk may start from 36 weeks gestation
- Express for 5 minutes, each side, 1-2 times/day (see over page for how to hand express).

Is it OK if I only get a few drops or no milk?

- Yes this is common for about 25% of women to get none or only a few drops. But try every day it will increase gradually.

How should I collect the colostrum?

- Collect colostrum/breastmilk first onto a clean container, spoon or straight into the syringe, whichever is easier for you, and seal with the cap provided
- Write the time, date and your name on the labels provided and attach to container or syringe.
- You can put the syringe in the fridge and add more colostrum to it later in the day

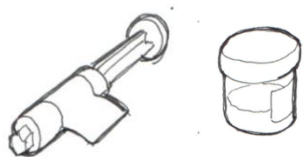
How do I store the colostrum once it is collected?

- Place the syringes in the freezer in a zip lock bag at the end of the day and start with a new syringe each day

How do I bring it to the Hospital for my baby?

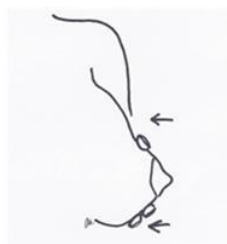
- Bring your frozen colostrum to the hospital in an esky or insulated bag with a freezer brick to keep it frozen. Once defrosted the milk will need to be used within 24 hours

Cease expressing immediately and do not resume if you experience any discomfort, abdominal or uterine tightening or cramping and/or bleeding and contact your birthing unit or antenatal care provider immediately.



How to hand express

1. Wash your hands with soap and water
2. Gently massage all around the breast, stroking towards the nipple may help to release the colostrum
3. Place your thumb and forefinger on opposite sides of areola, (see picture), well back from the nipple, about 2 cm and gently push towards your ribs and then bring your fingers towards each other through the breast in a slow rhythmic action, repeating as colostrum starts to flow
4. Your fingers should not slide on your skin, expressing can be uncomfortable but should not cause pain.
5. Repeat above steps on other breast
6. Collect the colostrum in a clean container and then draw it up into the syringe, seal with the cap.



You can watch a video on how to hand express:

<https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/how-to-express-your-first-milk/?portfolioID=5623>

