

Why should I express?

Expressing milk before your baby is born is a personal choice, but you may like to consider it for the following reasons:

- Your baby is at risk of low blood sugar after birth (this will be the case if you have diabetes or are taking certain medication). Colostrum is much better than formula at stabilising a baby's blood sugar.
- Your baby is at higher risk of feeding challenges e.g. twins, small babies.
- Hand expressing is a useful skill for all new mothers and you can become confident before your baby is born.
- You are unsure about breastfeeding but would like your baby to have the benefit of your colostrum.
- Peace of mind if you and your baby face any challenges getting breastfeeding off to a good start.



Picture for illustrative purposes only. You may get less or more than shown.

Further support

If you decide to continue feeding your baby breastmilk the following support is available:

- * Facebook: Cwm Taf Breastfeeding Network
- * Local breastfeeding groups with Health Visitors and specialist clinics with Infant Feeding Coordinators,
- * Breastfeeding support from Midwives, Maternity Care Support Workers and Nursery Nurses
- * National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212
- * A video demonstration of hand expressing can be found on the UNICEF website at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/hand-expression-video/>

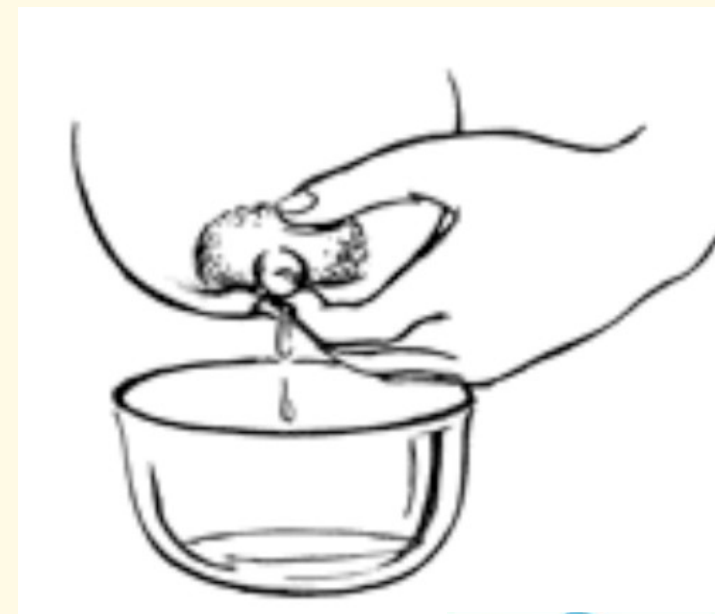
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ANTENATAL EXPRESSING



Speak to your Community Midwife if you have any questions about antenatal expressing or would like to discuss your individual circumstances.



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What is Colostrum?

- Colostrum is produced from around 16 weeks of pregnancy.
- It is a thick, sticky, yellow or clear substance that is made before breastmilk comes in.
- Colostrum lines the baby's gut with healthy bacteria and contains antibodies, hormones and nutrients.



When can I start?

Evidence shows it is safe to express from 36 weeks of pregnancy if you are not at risk of premature labour. If you are expecting your baby to arrive early talk to your care team for an individual plan.

Your community midwife can provide syringes.

Scan the code for a video on how to hand express.



How do I do it?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Get comfortable and **relax**.
3. Gently **massage** the breast from the back of the breast toward the nipple.
4. Cup your breast and place your thumb and finger about **2-3cms** from the base of the nipple.
5. Create a **'C' shape** with your thumb and fingers to **gently compress** this area. **Slowly release** the pressure and repeat to create a rhythm.
6. Avoid sliding your fingers across the breast tissue.
7. You can move your fingers towards the nipple or further away. Find the spot that works best for you.
8. When the flow slows down, move your fingers around to **another section** of the breast and **repeat** so that all lobes are drained.
9. Do the same in the other breast. Repeat 2-3 times a day.
10. Express the colostrum into a **sterilised feeding cup, small pot or plastic spoon** and use the syringes to draw up the colostrum.



How much will I get?

At first nothing may come out. Do not worry. It can take a few days for droplets to appear. Any time spent hand expressing will help to make colostrum in the future.

Storage of Colostrum

- Colostrum can be collected 2–3 times a day using the same syringe. The syringe must be stored at the back of the fridge between use.
- At the end of the day, put the syringe in the freezer in a zip-lock bag. Label it with your name, hospital number and date of collection.
- There are fridges and freezers at the hospital to store your colostrum. Transport frozen colostrum in a cool bag with ice packs and tell the staff straightaway that you have it so that it can be kept frozen until needed.
- Once defrosted colostrum must be used within 24 hours. It cannot be re-frozen.

Where can I store?	How long for?
Room temperature	6 hours
Back of the fridge 4°C	48 hours
Ice compartment of a fridge	2 weeks
Freezer 18°C or lower	6 months