

Antenatal Milk Expressing (AME)

Patient Information

Women's Health Service, Wellington & Kenepuru Hospitals

Expressing and storing breastmilk antenatally

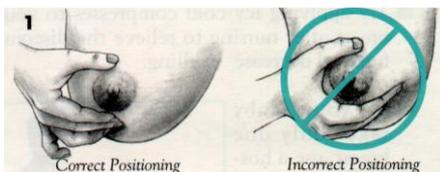
Congratulations on planning to breastfeed your baby. Here is some information on how you can collect a little breast milk (colostrum) before you give birth. This extra milk may help to keep your baby's blood sugar stable in the first few days.

When to express

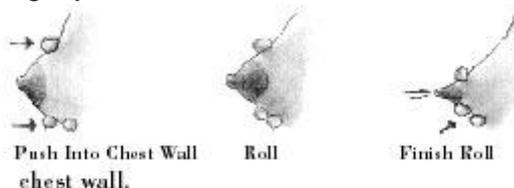
Start expressing as advised, usually from 34 -36 weeks of pregnancy. Whilst pregnant, it is best to express by hand.

Hand expressing

1. Wash your hands. Warm your breast up by having a warm shower, using a warm pack (wheat pack or hot water bottle) or massaging your breast for a minute or two. Put your thumb above the nipple and your first finger below the nipple, about 3-4cm from the nipple. Be sure the tip of your finger, the tip of your thumb and the tip of your nipple form a straight line



2. Push straight in to the chest wall. Avoid spreading the fingers apart
3. Roll the thumb and fingers together and slightly forward



Marmet technique

4. Repeat this procedure rhythmically. Position, push, roll. It may take a couple of minutes before you see any colostrum

5. Collect the colostrum by either sucking it into a syringe, or letting it run into a small clean cup
6. Do this for about 5 minutes on each breast, about 3-5 times a day (or whatever you feel you can manage each day). You can keep using the same syringe to collect the colostrum over the day, storing it in a clean container in the fridge in between collections. Avoid over filling the syringe. Put the cap on, and label the syringe at the end of each day and place in the freezer

Please note ...

If you experience uncomfortable tightenings during or following expressing, then stop, and seek advice from your lead maternity carer or midwife.

Taking your colostrum to delivery suite

Bring your frozen colostrum to delivery suite when you are admitted in labour. Ask the midwife looking after you to put it in the freezer (either in the postnatal ward or in NICU) straight away so it does not defrost. The midwife will tell you (and write in your notes) which freezer it is in.

Using your colostrum

When your baby is born, make sure you have skin to skin contact with him or her as soon as possible, and for as long as possible. Your midwife will help you to breastfeed your baby. She will encourage you to breastfeed whenever your baby wants to. She will advise you when you need to use the colostrum you have collected antenatally.

As far as possible she will support normal breastfeeding behaviour.

When your frozen colostrum is needed it will be thawed in small amounts and given to your baby using a syringe or cup. We try to avoid using bottles as they interfere with normal

breastfeeding. If you are diabetic, try to use all the colostrum over next 1-2 days even if your baby's blood sugar level is normal, as this is the most 'at risk' time for your baby. If there is more than your baby needs at this time, then it will be used on those busy second and third nights!

As you have risk factors for low milk supply, you will need to express by hand and/or pump, after each breastfeed until your baby's needs are being met fully by your milk supply.

Other actions to support breastfeeding

- Make sure you and baby spend a lot of time in **Skin to skin cuddles**, at birth and frequently after
- If your baby is in NICU, then ask to have **skin to skin** as often as possible. It will help you to express if you have a photograph of your baby, or an item that smells of him/her

- Keeping your baby with you (called **rooming in**) helps you to notice when your baby is hungry. You and baby will stay together unless there is a medical reason that this can not happen.
- **Breastfeeding on demand** – breastfeed your baby as often and for as long as baby wants
- Make a **breastfeeding plan** and discuss it with your LMC or midwife at delivery

Further support and advice

If you need further equipment, support and advice, ask your midwife. You can also contact lactation consultants at Wellington Hospital.

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