

Expressing breast milk

What is expressing breast milk?

Expressing breast milk is starting off and/or maintaining breast milk production with the aid of equipment or your own hands.

Why?

The most common reasons are:

- Mother and baby are separated, admission to incubator unit.
- You are not able to get your baby to latch on straight away.
- Your baby is not drinking or is drinking insufficiently from the breast.
- Extra stimulation of breast milk production.
- You are temporarily using medication that cannot be combined with breastfeeding.

When?

It is best to start as soon as possible after the birth, preferably within 6 hours. The nurse or maternity nurse will provide information and a diary to record the expressed milk. She will discuss a suitable expressing schedule and will be present during the first time to give you instructions and support. Try to express milk 8 times a day, or even more often.

Your body produces breast milk on the basis of supply and demand. The more often you express milk, the more you produce milk. Try to keep the break between the last time you express milk at night and the first time the next day as short as possible, no longer than 6 hours. Expressing milk during the night is recommended. The nurse will discuss with you what method of expressing is most suitable for your situation.

Preparation

- Get all the items ready and wash your hands.
- Try to express milk in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Expressing milk immediately after skin-to-skin contact with your baby often works even better!
- It can be very useful to help trigger the let-down reflex with your hands, by stimulating the nipple and areola between your thumb and fingers.
- We recommend expressing both breasts at the same time, because breast milk production will be higher as such.

Expressing milk with a breast pump

You may find it pleasant to prepare the breast by massaging it first. Use one hand to make soft circular movements towards the nipple while the other hand is supporting the breast. Our breast pumps have two programmes, one initiate and a maintain. The nurse or maternity nurse will tell you which programme is most suitable for you and how it works.

- Attach the expressing kit to the unit.
- Place the expressing funnel on your breast. Do not press too hard otherwise you may squeeze the milk ducts. The nipple must be in the middle of the tunnel.
- Switch the expressing unit on and adjust it to the maximum comfortable vacuum, with assistance from the nurse. Expressing milk should not hurt.

An expressing session takes approximately 15-20 minutes. The initiate programme automatically stops. It is very beneficial for breast milk production to continue expressing with

the standard programme for about 5 minutes afterwards. When using the maintain, press the stop button after 15-20 minutes have elapsed. Gently release the vacuum between the skin and the expressing funnel.

Remove the bottle from the expressing funnel and screw the lid on the bottle. Mark the bottle with a sticker that shows the baby's name and the date and time you expressed the milk.

Expressed breast milk will be kept in the fridge for you. After use, rinse the expressing funnel first with cold and then with warm water. It should then be dried by using paper towels. If necessary, the nurse will help you with this. The tubes must not be rinsed! Store the expressing kit in a clean hydrophilic towel in the basket provided for you. Each day, the nurse will give you a new expressing kit.

Expressing manually

Advantages:

- comfortable
- always available
- good let-down reflex through direct skin contact
- free

Techniques

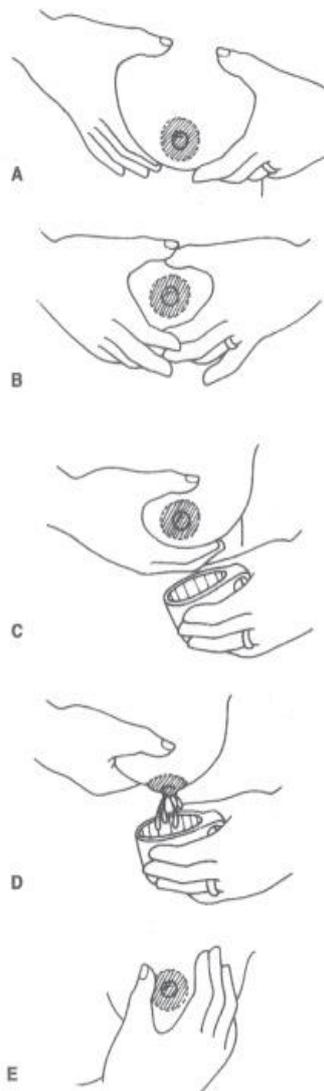
Wash your hands; take a sterile spoon or cup to collect the milk.

- A. Use techniques to stimulate let-down of the milk (such as breast massage and stroking the breast). Make yourself comfortable and take a deep breath before starting.
- B. Gently press your breast, rolling your hands forwards off the breast towards the nipple.
- C. Squeeze your breast between thumb-index-middle finger about two to three centimetres behind your nipple (this distance does not always correspond with the edge of the areola).
Your breast is held between the three fingers, push your breast gently but firmly towards the ribcage, without spreading your fingers.
- D. Squeeze gently with a rolling movement toward the nipple. Relax the hand and repeat this action in a

rhythmical manner until no more breast milk flows out.

This action must feel pleasant, must not hurt and be so light so that you will not tire out quickly. Take your time, it may take 2 minutes before the first drops come out.

- E. Change the position of your fingers around the areola to push as much milk out of all the milk ducts; the milk flow will decrease within 3-5 minutes and then the other breast can be expressed. Alternate hands for each breast.



Avoid pushing hard on the breast or pulling at the nipple or breast. This may damage your breast tissue. Change breasts several times during each expressing session. Alternating is important to avoid pain and to ensure a good milk flow. The expressing session lasts up to 20-30 minutes. The more skilled you become, the shorter the expressing session and the higher the milk production will be.

For more information about expressing manually, please see the film via the following link:

<http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/HandExpression.html>