

Expressing milk for your baby – expressing log

Information for parents



Your body has made milk since you were 16-22 weeks pregnant and now we encourage you to start expressing milk. Ideally this should start within two hours of baby being born, or as soon as possible after birth. Massage and breast compressions will help stimulate your milk ejection.

The value of colostrum

Colostrum is the early human milk that you make late on in pregnancy and in the first few days after giving birth. Every drop of human milk your baby receives will give them the best possible start in life. It protects baby from infection (especially of their gut), it contains components which help your baby grow and develop and it is easier to digest compared to formula milk.

You can decide later if you would like to carry on to breast/chest feed or express longer term.

Expressing assessments

Neonatal or maternity staff will offer you an expressing assessment within 12 hours of your baby's birth and then a minimum of twice a week for the first two weeks, or more frequently if you require.

Expressing – hand or pump

You can express by the side of your baby's cot or in our expressing room. If this is not possible, look at a video/photograph of your baby and use the fabric bonding shapes to smell your baby as this will help with your let down and increase your oxytocin levels (oxytocin is the love hormone and helps milk delivery).

If possible, you need to express 8-10 times in 24 hours and at least once at night between 1am and 4am, as this has been shown to increase milk production due to higher levels of prolactin at night (prolactin is the milk-making hormone).

During the first few days you may only get small amounts, but this should increase in volume each day. It is good practice to mix between hand expressing and the pump in the first few days.

Double pumping has been shown to not only be most effective but can reduce the amount of time spent expressing. Express each breast until the milk slows down and then continue for a further two minutes to help increase production. You can then complete another cycle or stop expressing. Cluster pumping (or power pumping) may be useful to fit expressing around your lifestyle. Staff can advise you on these types of pumping.

Storage of human milk

You can store freshly expressed breast milk for 48 hours in the hospital fridge and 3 months in the hospital freezer while you are in hospital. Once taken out of the freezer, it must be used within 24 hours.

At home, expressed milk can be stored in your fridge for five days in the back of the fridge. If it is not likely to be used within five days, it can be placed in your freezer for up to six months.

Please do refer to the NHS website for further information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding/expressing-breast-milk/

Please ask a member of staff if you need any support.

Skin to skin

Skin to skin has many benefits for you and your baby. It can help your oxytocin levels, stimulate your milk supply and is good for your baby's immune system. Please do ask staff if you would like support to have skin to skin with your baby.

Expressing log

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**Please use this space to record any comments
or questions you need to ask**

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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