

Antenatal Expression Guide



Congratulations on the pending birth of your baby or babies.

Hand expression of Colostrum during your pregnancy, from 36 weeks, may have been recommended by your Obstetrician or Midwife.

Some babies potentially require more fluids in the first few days after birth for the following reasons:

- If you have Type 1, Type 2 or Gestational diabetes.
- Previous history of low supply.
- History of breast augmentation i.e. implants or breast reduction surgery.
- A strong family history of cows' milk sensitivity.
- If your baby has been identified as having a condition such as cleft lip or palate. Or any other condition in which baby may benefit from extra fluid in the early days after birth.
- Extra colostrum after birth can help a baby's blood sugar remain at normal levels. Your baby's blood sugar levels may be measured at 1 hour and then again at 4 hours after birth. This will vary depending on your Pediatricians requests.

Equipment

1. 6 – 12 x 1ml sterile syringes
2. Caps or Foil to seal syringe
3. Please label each individual syringe with your Name, DOB, Date Colostrum Expressed (Stickers)
4. Clip lock bag to store syringes
5. Cooler bag and ice bricks to transport colostrum to hospital

Hand Expressing Guidelines

1. Hand expression of colostrum is best done after a warm shower and when you are feeling relaxed.
2. Wash your hands thoroughly.
3. Find a comfortable place to sit that's private.
4. Take the sterile syringe out of the packet.
5. Place your thumb and forefinger in a C position on your breast.
6. Gently squeeze rhythmically towards nipple until colostrum comes out.
7. Draw up the colostrum into the syringe, a second pair of hands is helpful. Expressing onto a clean spoon may be easier and then draw it up into syringe.
8. Just 5 – 7 minutes per breast is recommended, 0.2 – 3mls or whatever you can in that time, once or twice a day.
9. If you get uterine tightening during antenatal expression, then stop.
10. Label each syringe and place in fridge to cool for 3 hours, then freeze.
11. When you transport expressed colostrum to hospital keep it frozen in a freezer bag.
12. Let your Midwife know on arrival that you have expressed colostrum antenatally and he/she will store it for you safely in the nursery milk room with your identification labels on each syringe.

References

Amann, Virginia 2025 RN.RM.IBCLC, Antenatal Educator

Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au>antenatal-expression-colostrum

National Health and Medical Research Council 2012 Infant feeding guidelines NHMRC, Canberra, p59 South

Australian Perinatal Practice Guidelines; Breastfeeding