

## How often should I express?

Start expressing from 37 weeks. While you are pregnant, you can express up to a maximum of 2-3 times daily.

## When and how do I bring my milk into hospital?

When you attend hospital for the birth of your baby, remember to bring in your frozen colostrum. Bring it in a cool bag with an ice pack. Let your midwife know immediately, so that it can then be stored in a freezer to prevent it from defrosting too soon. If you've not used your colostrum before you go home, please remember to ask for it to take with you. If you do not ask for it, we are sorry but we will have to dispose of it as we have limited space.

## Further information

If you have any questions please speak to your midwife or ring the hospital and ask to speak to the:

- Specialist Midwife for Diabetes
- Specialist Midwife Infant Feeding Coordinator

## Breastfeeding helplines and websites

National Breastfeeding helpline: 0300 100 0212

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers: 0300 330 5453 [www.abm.me.uk](http://www.abm.me.uk)

Breastfeeding Network [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)

La Leche League: 0345 120 2918 [www.laleche.org.uk](http://www.laleche.org.uk)

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you would like to give feedback on this leaflet please contact the Specialist Midwife Infant Feeding Coordinator on 01522 573174

If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please email the Patient Information team at [patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk)



# Antenatal Hand Expression

## Maternity Services

Pilgrim Hospital Maternity Ward 01205 445429

Grantham Maternity Unit 01476 464334

Lincoln County - Nettleham Ward 01522 573134

## Why collect colostrum during pregnancy?

Collecting some of your milk (colostrum) before the birth of your baby can be useful if your baby needs some extra help with feeding in the early days. Colostrum helps to stabilise blood glucose levels and is particularly high in infection fighting properties including antibodies.

It is useful to have colostrum available when:

- Mother: has diabetes or has taken labetalol in pregnancy
- Baby: is premature, small, ill or has a condition such as a heart defect or cleft palate.

Hand expression when you are pregnant should **ONLY** be done from 37 weeks onwards and **ONLY** after checking with your midwife.

## How to hand express

1. Wash your hands. Have a clean sterilised container/oral syringe to hand before you start.
2. Stimulate the milk flow by gently massaging your breasts, then roll nipples between finger and thumb.
3. Cup your breast and place your thumb and finger about 2-3 cm from the base of the nipple.
4. Using your thumb and the rest of your fingers in a C shape, gently but firmly compress and release in a rhythm – this should not hurt.
5. Drops of colostrum will appear. If colostrum does not drip after a few minutes, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further



away and try again.

6. Avoid sliding your fingers along as this tends to block the ducts.

7. Colostrum is quite sticky and tends to only come out as drops. Use the oral syringe to collect the colostrum.

8. When the drips slow down, move your fingers round to express a different section of your breast and compress and release again, collecting more drips in the syringe.

9. When the drips slow, then move to the other breast and repeat.



## What if I get some tightenings?

Towards the end of your pregnancy you may start to feel your bump going hard and then softening, this is your womb tightening and relaxing. These are called Braxton Hicks contractions and are quite normal. This may also occur when you express. Stop expressing if these contractions become painful. The contractions are likely to settle. If they don't stop and you think labour may have started contact the Labour Ward for advice.

## How to collect and store colostrum?

- Colostrum can be collected in the same syringe in a 24 hour period, store colostrum in the fridge in between each expression
- Use a new syringe each day
- Store syringes in a zip lock bag in the freezer
- Label syringes with your name, the date and time of expression
- Colostrum can be stored in the ice compartment of a fridge for 2 weeks or for up to 6 months in a freezer.