

How to Hand Express Colostrum/Breastmilk

Lactation Services

Hand expression is a useful skill for any new mother. It can help you provide rich drops of colostrum during the first sleepy days, stimulate an abundant milk supply, and relieve breast fullness. It may take a few sessions before any colostrum is expressed. This is expected! As these precious drops start to grow you will be able to collect them in the small tubes we provide for you and then give this wonderful gift to your baby.

Steps for Hand Expression:

1. **Wash your hands, have a small tube ready, and gently massage each breast.**
2. **Position fingers on your breast in a C-shape** about 1½-2 inches from the nipple.
 - **PRESS** your fingers and thumb back towards your chest
 - **COMPRESS** your fingers together on the inside portion of your breast where you have milk ducts
 - **ROLL** slightly forward. The drops will then grow.
 - **RELAX** your hand without moving your hand from your breast
 - **REPEAT RHYTHMICALLY.** This helps to mimic the action of a baby breastfeeding.
 - **Move your hand to different areas of the breast.** Try 12:00 & 6:00 o'clock, 3:00 & 9:00...
3. **Find your sweet spot:** Experiment to find what works best and is most comfortable for you.
4. **Switch from one breast to the other every few minutes.** This is more effective than longer sessions.
5. Place the provided label with your printed name on the tube, write the date and time on it. Take the tube to the NICU if your baby is there.

Avoid These Motions:

1. **Do not squeeze the breast** – this can cause bruising.
2. **Avoid pulling the nipple** – may result in tissue damage.
3. **Avoid sliding hands over the breast** – may cause painful skin burns.
4. **Avoid spreading the fingers apart** and tightening skin.

Please watch a Hand Expression video by scanning this QR code.



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