

Purpose

- This is something you can do to prepare for your baby's arrival - for situations such as an expected early delivery, medical condition or previous breastfeeding difficulties.
- If you have **diabetes** in pregnancy your baby may be at risk of LOW blood sugars immediately after birth. Your colostrum along with breastfeeding will help baby maintain blood sugar after birth.
- **Colostrum provides human antibodies, protects baby's digestive system and is an adequate energy source for most babies even though the quantity is small.**
- Exclusive breastfeeding is the gold standard for feeding human babies – collecting colostrum during pregnancy may help you achieve this.

Comfort

Hand expressing should never hurt.

Your midwife will show you how to hand express to collect your colostrum. Press your fingers and thumb inwards towards your ribs. Press your breast together, compress and then release, slowing getting into a rhythm to produce a flow. Press well away from the nipple. Visit www.stanford.edu Keywords: Hand Expressing - to view a how-to video

Concerns

If you develop any abdominal pains while expressing you should stop.

Labour is not usually triggered by this process unless your uterus is very sensitive and ready for birthing.

TIPS - some women have little colostrum, some have lots. Don't give up – it seems to get easier the closer to term. If it hurts, perhaps your fingers are too close to the nipple. Avoid squeezing, pulling or sliding.

How to hand express



Start @ 36-40 weeks

- Aim to express by hand for 3-5 mins each side, 3-4 times per day into a cup or spoon.
- Draw colostrum up in a syringe and store in fridge
- Add to syringe over the next 2 days
- Label each syringe with date and freeze in a named zip lock bag
- Bring frozen syringes to hospital in a cool pack to keep frozen
- Store on Ward 96 in the appropriate freezer.
- If baby is unable to breastfeed feed at birth, give 2-10ml colostrum over the next 24hrs

Safety

Clean hands and receiver. Label the syringe with your name and date, keep chilled and freeze within 48 hours of expressing

Which milk to use?

Straight from mother is always best, then fresh unfrozen milk. The goal is for baby to stay with mother and feed directly as soon as possible. If baby has to be separated from you there is consolation in having your colostrum available.

Storage of Expressed Breast Milk

- Date containers at the time of collection, and make sure caregivers use the oldest milk first.
- Over the course of 2 days you can keep adding to the current container and if not being used at that time it must be put in the freezer.
- Adding expressed breast milk to frozen milk can cause the milk to thaw and then refreeze, which increases the risk of bacterial growth in the milk.
- If you only need to store breast milk a short time, and don't have access to a fridge or freezer, you can use an insulated cooler bag with ice packs.
- Don't use this method to store milk for more than 24 hours.

Transport of Expressed Breast Milk

- Ask your Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) to advise the hospital that you will be bringing in your EBM so they are aware that it will be available for use if needed.
- Use an insulated cooler bag with ice packs to transport the EBM and place it in the freezer on Ward 96 (staff will assist you with this) so it will be available for use when needed. You can access the freezer at any time, even if you are on Tamaki Ward for your postnatal stay.
- Make sure the EBM is clearly dated/timed so the oldest is used first.

Defrosting and Using Expressed Breast Milk

- Frozen expressed breast milk can be thawed in the refrigerator overnight and will last for 24hrs or by placing the container in warm water until the milk has thawed and will last for 4hrs max at room temperature (cannot be refrozen).
- Expressed breast milk should not be thawed or heated using a microwave because: microwaving destroys some of the milk's immunological components there is a risk of uneven heating and scalding.
- Before feeding the infant, caregivers should swirl the container of milk to mix the fat portion back in and distribute the heat evenly.
- They should test the temperature of the milk by shaking a few drops on the inside of their wrist. It should feel comfortably warm to the touch before being given to the infant.

Guidelines for storing expressed breast milk

Storage conditions	Storage time	Comments
Room temperature (< 26°C)	4 hours	Cover containers and keep them as cool as possible
Refrigerated – fridges should operate at 2-4 °C	48 hours	Store milk in the back of the main body of the fridge
Frozen Freezer box in refrigerator	2 weeks	Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where the temperature is most constant
Separate door fridge/freezer	3–6 months	
Separate deep-freeze	6–12 months	

References

- Cox Sue: Expressing and Storing Colostrum Antenatally for Use in the Newborn Period. Issues 17 (1) Apr/May2007
- Dr Jane Morton <http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/HandExpression.html>
- NZ Ministry of Health Guidelines for Storage of Breastmilk.

Thanks to Otago maternity for the use of this document



Women's Health

Collecting Colostrum during Pregnancy and Storing, Freezing and Transport of Expressed Breast Milk (EBM)

Tena koutou katoa, Kia orana, Talofa lava,
Malo e lelei, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Taloha Ni,
Ni Sa Bula Vinaka,
Greetings and Welcome to National Women's Health

N:\Groups\Everyone\NW written information for women\
Maternity Service\Breastfeeding (ADHB) -
Feb 14

Auckland District Health Board
National Women's Health