

**Make More Milk Sooner  
A Guide to Hand Expression**



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Your body has been preparing to feed your baby since early in pregnancy.

As you approach delivery, your breasts have early milk, or colostrum, already present.

Hand expressing this milk in the early hours and days following delivery can help you and your infant breastfeed more comfortably and make more milk.

**How do I hand express?**

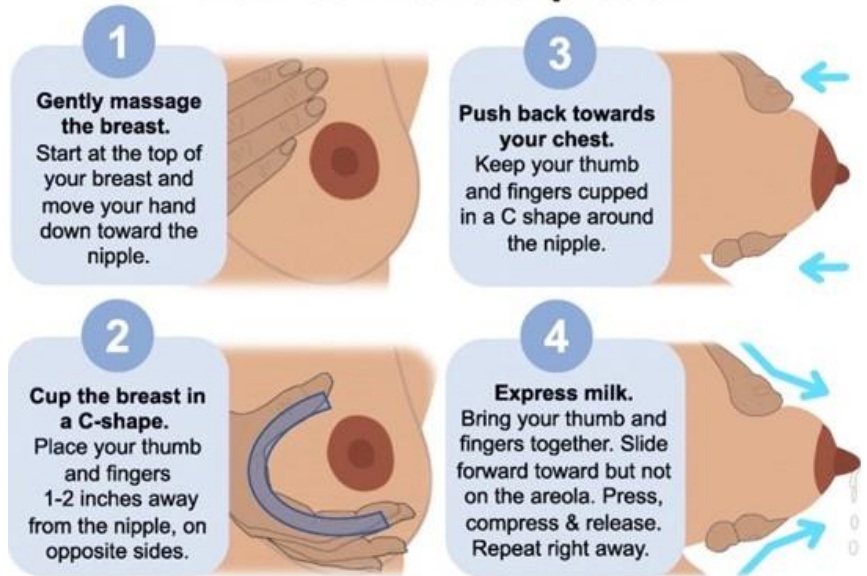


Image Credit: Alibhai, et al. The Ottawa Hospital, Ottawa, Canada

**Why hand express?**

- ❖ High touch, low tech strategy to initiate feeding your baby
- ❖ A drop of colostrum expressed on your nipple can encourage baby to latch
- ❖ Expressed colostrum can be given on a spoon or by syringe to prevent low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), if baby needs the nutrition as a supplement or is having difficulty learning to breastfeed
- ❖ Stimulates the transition from colostrum to mature milk
- ❖ Can safely relieve engorgement for comfort or to help baby latch

**When to hand express?**

- ❖ At the start of every feed
- ❖ When baby is first latching to improve transfer of milk
- ❖ If your baby is not latching well
- ❖ To relieve very full breasts
- ❖ When your nipples are too sore to latch baby or pump
- ❖ When you need to express but don't have your pump handy
- ❖ Most women can start hand expressing after 36-37 weeks of pregnancy. Check with your provider first.

**How to hand express?**

- ❖ Wash hands and get comfortable
- ❖ Use the tips above to help you position your hand on your breast
- ❖ After completing step 4 for a few minutes, rotate your hands to a different area on the breast and repeat in a few different areas, then switch to the other breast
- ❖ If you are expressing to collect colostrum, gather a small collection container (such as a cup or bottle), or a syringe to draw up the drops of colostrum. Any storage container should be "food safe".

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**How to store colostrum?**

- ❖ Colostrum storage containers are available online. Small tubes or syringes are common.
- ❖ Label the container with your name, date of birth, and date of collection. Use a new tube for fresh colostrum.
- ❖ Colostrum can be stored in the fridge for 4 days or in a regular freezer for 6 months.

**How much is normal?**

- ❖ Drops of colostrum is normal! You will see a gradual increase as you learn the technique.
- ❖ In the first day of life infants take 1-2 teaspoons of colostrum at a time.
- ❖ Baby will continue to get colostrum from the breast even if you are hand expressing. In fact, hand expressing can help your body make MORE for your baby.

**Your body is actively making colostrum prior to and immediately after delivery.**

**The hormonal changes that occur during this time stimulate the process of mature milk production.**

Use these QR codes for more ways to learn hand expression

[First Droplets](#)



[Lactation Training Hand Expression](#)

