



## Expression, Storage and Transport of Breast Milk

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### Initiating your milk supply

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If your baby is too small or sick to breastfeed you will need to stimulate your breastmilk supply by expressing. The first expression should be as soon as possible after birth. Early expression of colostrum is done by hand. The midwives and nurses will assist you.

#### *Hand Expression*

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Gently massage your breast with your hands from the top of your breast to the nipple.
3. Hold a sterile plastic container or syringe under your nipple.
4. Place your thumb and forefinger on the edge of your areola (the pigmented area surrounding your nipple.)
5. Gently press inward towards the centre of your breast squeezing your fingers together without moving them over the breast.
6. Repeat rhythmically and gently.

Move your fingers around the areola to ensure all areas of the breast are expressed. Keep expressing until the flow of milk has stopped or for at least 10 minutes. Repeat on the other breast. If you would like to express more milk, try repeating again on both breasts.

Hand express 8 times per day.

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### Maintaining your milk supply

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After 48hours mothers commence using the electric breast pump. A combination of hand expressing and using the electric breast pump at the transitional time is most successful. Breast milk starts to flow approximately day 3-4 for most mothers. The nurses and midwives will assist you with pump use, hygiene and safe milk storage. Continue to express milk 8 times in 24hours. The first two weeks after baby's birth are the most important for establishing a breast milk supply.

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### After discharge

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You will need to obtain your own pumping equipment. Until your baby is home and breastfeeding strongly you will need to maintain or protect your milk supply by expressing/pumping breast milk. Speak to your nurse, midwife or lactation consultant for options. These include hiring or buying a breast pump. Good hygiene with pumping equipment and safe storage and transport of breast milk is paramount to prevent illness particularly in vulnerable babies.