

How do I express by hand?

Canterbury

District Health Board
Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

STEP 1



Start off by encouraging your milk to flow — being near your baby will help. To express by hand, start by gently massaging your breast and nipple to stimulate the hormones needed to release milk.

STEP 2



Position your thumb and fingers in a 'C' shape, 2 to 3 cm back from the base of your nipple.

STEP 3



Gently press and release, press and release, and keep repeating until your milk starts to flow. This may take a few minutes.

STEP 4



When the flow slows down, move your fingers round to a different part of your breast and start again.

If your baby only feeds from one breast, you could express from the other.

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Collection and identification of colostrum in the Neonatal Unit

Your colostrum is like a medicine for your baby which only you can provide

- ◆ Colostrum is the milk that your body makes at the end of pregnancy and during the first days after birth.
- ◆ Colostrum contains high amounts of antibodies and other substances that help protect your baby from infections and bowel disease.
- ◆ Every drop you express should be collected and given fresh or saved for later.
- ◆ Even if you had not planned to breastfeed, we encourage you to give your colostrum to your baby for protection.
- ◆ In the early days after birth it is more important how often you express, rather than how much you produce.
- ◆ Early and frequent hand expressing/pumping helps your milk to come in.

To establish a good milk supply in the coming weeks

- ◆ It is crucial for you to express every 2-3 hours during the day and at least once at night, or 8 times in 24 hours, which is how often a term baby feeds.
- ◆ There are electric breast pumps for you to use that have an **initiate programme** specifically designed for mothers in the first 5 days after birth. Hand expressing after using the pump may provide you with more colostrum too.
- ◆ It is also important that your colostrum is used in order as it changes with each expression.

In the first week

Apply the yellow dots to your syringe or bottle, in numbered order: 1,2,3,4, etc.

In the second week

Apply the green dots to your bottle lids.



In this pack you will find:

- An expressing log for you to fill out for the next 14 days so you can manage your expressing/pumping schedule.
- Numbered, coloured stickers to put into the syringe or bottles as shown in the photo.
- A number of syringes to start collecting your colostrum
- A hand-expressing instruction card