



مؤسسة الرعاية الصحية الأولية  
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CORPORATION

## How to express your Breastmilk?







**You wish to continue providing your baby with valuable breast milk?**

**This leaflet will give you tips on how to express your breast milk when you are away from your baby.**



**What does expressing  
milk mean?**

**Expressing milk means  
squeezing milk out of  
your breast.**

## Expressing milk is useful to:

- Leave breast milk for your baby when you go out or go to work.
- Feed your low-birth-weight baby who cannot breastfeed.
- Feed your sick baby, who cannot suckle enough.
- Keep up the supply of breast milk when you are or your baby is ill.
- Prevent leaking when you are away from your baby.
- Help your baby to latch to a full breast.
- Help with breast health conditions, e.g. engorgement.

# Expressing milk for your baby

(premature, low-birth-weight or ill)



- Start expressing your milk as soon as possible after your baby is born (express at least 8 times over 24 hours, including during the night).
- You may only express a few drops of colostrum at first, but it helps breast milk production to begin, in the same way as a baby suckling soon after delivery. You should express as much as you can as often as your baby would breastfeed.
- You can store your breastmilk in the fridge or freeze it. Make sure you label it with the date you expressed the breastmilk and use the oldest one first.

## Steps to prepare a container for expressed breast milk:

- Step 1:** Choose a cup, glass, jug or jar with a wide mouth.
- Step 2:** Wash the cup in soap and water
- Step 3:** Pour boiling water into the cup, and leave it for a few minutes, as it will kill the germs.
- Step 4:** When ready to express milk, pour the water out of the cup.
- Step 5:** Cover the cup with safe coverings to keep the milk fresh and pure.



# How to stimulate the oxytocin reflex?

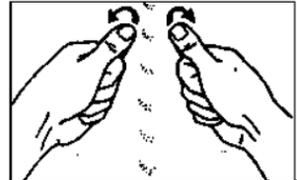


## ■ Stimulate it psychologically:

- Build your confidence
- Try to reduce any sources of pain or anxiety
- Foster good thoughts and feelings about the baby

## ■ Stimulate it practically:

- **Sit quietly and privately or with a supportive friend.**
- **Hold your baby with skin to skin contact if possible.**  
you can hold your baby on your lap while you express. If this is not possible, you can look at the baby. If this is not possible, sometimes even looking at a photograph of your baby helps.
- **Warm your breasts**  
Apply a warm compress, warm water, or have a warm shower.
- **Stimulate your nipples and massage or stroke your breasts lightly**
- **Ask someone to rub your back.**



# Methods of expressing your milk



There are three main methods of expressing breastmilk:



**By Hand**



**Hand Pumps**



**Electric Pumps**

Whichever method you choose, it is important that you wash your hands thoroughly before you start. All containers, bottles and pump pieces must be washed in hot soapy water and sterilized before use.

## 1. Expressing by hand

Why express by hand? (WHO recommendation)

- If your breasts feel uncomfortably full.
- If your baby isn't sucking well but you still want to give him/her your milk.
- If you don't want to buy or use a pump to express milk.
- Because in the first few days, it is easier to express by hand.
- Because hand expression is the most useful way to express breast milk. It is less likely to carry infection than a pump, and is available to every woman at any time.
- Because it is important for women to know that they can express their milk by hand and to learn how; and not to think that a pump is necessary.



### Steps to express milk by hand:

**Step 1:** Have a clean sterilized container at hand before you start.

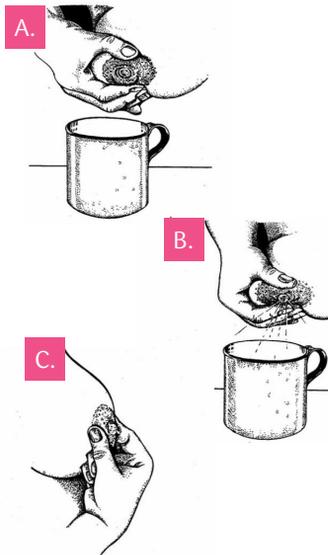
**Step 2:** Cup your breast and place your thumb and finger about 2-3 cm from the base of the nipple.

**Step 3:** Using your thumb and the rest of your fingers in a C shape, gently squeeze this area - this shouldn't hurt.

**Step 4:** Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. At first, only drops will appear, but just keep going as it will help build up your supply. With practice and a little more time, milk will flow freely.

**Step 5:** When the flow slows down, move your fingers round to try a different section of your breast and repeat. When this happens again swap to the other breast. Keep changing breasts until the milk is dripping very slowly or stops altogether.

**Step 6:** If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away, and try a gentle breast massage.



## 2. Hand Pumps

Hand pumps are easier to use when your breasts are full than when they are soft. There are a number of different designs, all of which work in slightly different ways. Some are operated by hand and some by battery. They all have a funnel which fits over the nipple and areola. Different pumps suit different women - it is therefore best, if at all possible, to try out a pump before buying.



## 3. Electric Pumps

These are fast and easy because they work automatically. They are particularly good if you need to express for an extended period, eg. if your baby is in the Special Care Baby Unit. If this is the case, then you should try to express a minimum of 6-8 times in 24 hours (including at least once during the night) to maintain your supply.



It is possible to express both breasts at the same time using an electric pump. This is quicker than other methods and may help you to produce more milk. You will require a dual pumping beaker set or two single beaker sets and a T connector.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions very carefully if you use a hand or electric pump.



## How often you should express milk?

How often you should express your milk depends on the reason for expressing the milk.

Usually, you express as often as the baby would breastfeed.



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