

# Expressing Breast Milk for your Baby in NCCU





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If your baby is unable to breastfeed from birth you will need to begin expressing your breastmilk as soon as possible.

## How often and how long do I need to express?

In the beginning it is important to express your breasts seven to eight times per day, including at least once during the night. A newborn baby usually feeds every two to three hours. This is the ideal pattern, both for the baby's digestive system and for stimulating your milk supply. Women who express frequently (including over night) for the first couple of weeks have fewer problems in maintaining their milk supply.

The midwife caring for you will guide you on how to start expressing. Initially after birth your breasts will need about 10 to 15 minutes of expressing each side to stimulate milk production.

After your milk supply comes in you may notice it takes longer to drain your breasts. With an established milk supply you will know your breasts are drained when they feel soft, lump free and the milk flow has slowed to an occasional drip. The length of time you need to express may vary on how much milk you produce and how quickly your let down reflex (the mechanism that releases the milk from the breast) works.

### Suggested expressing times:

- 6.00am
- 9.00am to 10.00am
- 12noon
- 3.00pm to 4.00pm
- 6.00pm to 7.00pm
- 9.00pm to 10.00pm
- 2.00am to 3.00am

## How much milk will I expect to express?

Initially after birth your breasts produce colostrum in small quantities from a few drops up to 30mL per expression. Your milk supply should establish

within the first few weeks. As you continue to express your breasts this volume will increase. Studies have shown that the volume of milk women can produce by two weeks is between 440mL and 1200mL in 24 hours. It is helpful to keep a diary recording the time and how much milk you express at each session.

## Expressing equipment

While you are in hospital, expressing kits are provided. You will need to purchase your own kit before you go home. If your baby is in KEMH you can purchase a single or double expressing kit and hire an electric breast pump from the Neonatal Unit. Before your discharge from the postnatal ward we would encourage you to attend a milk room talk. The timetable for talks will be available from your midwife.

If your baby is in 6B at PMH, please see the midwife for information on where to purchase an expressing kit and hire an electric breast pump.

## Expressing in the nursery

There are electric pumps available to you in each nursery for use at your baby's cotside or in the expressing room. Clean bottles for expressing are available in the fridge in each nursery.

The **advantages of expressing beside your baby** are:

- An increase in your milk supply.
- Staying close to your baby for longer periods.

After expressing wipe down the electric pump with the hospital's cleaning solution.

### At KEMH

You will need to bring your expressing cup and tubing with you.

### At PMH

An expressing kit will be loaned to you for hospital use only. Storage bottles are located in the silver refrigerator in the main corridor.

## Expressing with your own kit

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before starting.
- Use a clean container/bottle for each expression.
- Label containers with an EBM sticker and your baby's sticker including the date and time of the expression. Please write on the sticker any antibiotics you have taken in the last 24 hours.

## Cleaning your own expressing kit

- Rinse all parts that come into contact with your breast milk in cold water.
- Wash in hot soapy water then rinse with hot water.
- Air dry or dry with a clean paper towel.
- Store in a clean dry container until your next expression.

## Storing / transporting your expressed breast milk

**At home** cool freshly expressed breast milk for half an hour in the fridge before adding to your stored cold breast milk. Store your milk in the refrigerator if you are intending to come in every day.

When transporting your milk, bring it in a small cooler with a reusable ice block. Any expressed breast milk not used for your baby within 48 hours of expressing will need to be frozen. Please tell the nurses if you have brought in frozen milk so that it can be taken straight to the milk room freezer.

**At KEMH** place your milk in:

- the bottom of the refrigerator in your baby's nursery in the black tray provided OR
- the milk room.

**At PMH** place your milk in the right side of the silver refrigerator located in the main corridor, at any time of the day.

## Expressing problems you may encounter

### 1. Sore nipples

- Stroking your breasts gently before expressing can promote milk flow.
- Make sure the cup fits correctly - a larger or soft cup is available. Ask your midwife on the ward / lactation consultant / milk room nurse.
- Ensure a gentle even pressure on your nipple and breast when expressing.
- Initially use a low pressure on the electric pump and then increase/adjust to your comfort level.
- Apply a few drops of your expressed breast milk to your nipples and let them air dry after you finish expressing.
- If soreness continues talk to the nurse caring for your baby, the lactation consultant or the midwife on 6B.

### 2. Fluctuations in milk supply

Your volume of milk may change from day to day and from one expressing session to another. It is normal for one breast to produce more milk than the other breast. Aim to keep your milk supply greater than 500mL per 24 hours. This is approximately the amount your baby will need when you take your baby home.

#### Factors that may increase your milk supply

- Expressing at least seven to eight times per day.
- Double expressing followed by single expressing each breast for a few minutes to ensure complete drainage.
- Rest and relaxation, especially while you are expressing.
- Improvement in your baby's condition.
- Skin-to-skin contact with your baby.
- Beginning to breastfeed.
- Well balanced diet, not skipping meals.
- Drinking at least six to eight glasses of water a day.

## Factors that may reduce your milk supply

- Infrequent or skipped expressing times.
- Not draining your breasts with each expression.
- Fatigue, anxiety and stress.
- Your baby's condition worsens.
- Medications such as cold/flu tablets with antihistamines or the combined birth control pill.
- You are unwell.
- Cigarette smoking.
- Anaemia.
- Alcohol.

## For information or help

Contact	Times available	Phone no.
Milk Room Nurse KEMH	Daily between 7.00am to 2.00pm	(08) 9340 2099
Lactation Consultant KEMH	By appointment	(08) 9340 2222 page 3462
Midwife 6B PMH	Daily between 7.00am to 1.00pm	(08) 9340 8222 page 8534
Breastfeeding Centre KEMH	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 4.30pm	(08) 9340 1844
Australian Breastfeeding Association	7 Day Helpline	1800 686 2 686 1800 mum 2 mum







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This information is available in  
alternative formats upon request

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