



The Dudley Group
NHS Foundation Trust

Information on feeding your baby – hand expression and cup feeding

Maternity Department
Patient Information Leaflet



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Introduction

Sometimes babies cannot latch onto your breast or they cannot breastfeed, for a number of reasons. In this situation you can express colostrum and give it to your baby.

Every pregnant woman makes milk for her baby which is ready and available at birth. The milk produced during the first few days is called colostrum and is sometimes a yellow colour. Colostrum is a very valuable source of nutrition for your baby.

Being able to hand express breast milk is a useful skill for all mothers to have. It is a skill that will be taught to you before you give birth by a health professional. It is a way of using your hands to obtain some breast milk to give to your baby.

How do I express milk by hand?

If you have decided to breastfeed, or want to give your baby breast milk, you can hand express and collect your milk. Hand expression can be started from 36 weeks of pregnancy and can also be performed after the birth of your baby.

A good time to hand express is after you have had a shower or bath as the warmth encourages milk to flow. A calm, relaxed environment will also help your milk to flow.

It is a good idea to start expressing milk for just a few minutes on both breasts. This should not hurt or cause labour to start. Consult your midwife if you have any concerns.

How to hand express:

- Wash your hands
- Have a sterilised container to express your colostrum into. This could be a cup, spoon or syringe.
- Massage your breasts before you begin.
- Make a 'C' shape with your thumb and forefinger and place them two to three centimetres from your nipple (see figure 1).
- Gently compress and release in this area. It may take a little time for your milk to start flowing, and you may need to adjust your fingers.

- Draw the drops of milk into the syringe or collect onto a spoon or in cup and then draw the milk into the syringe and add the bung.
- When the flow stops move your fingers to a different area and express from both breasts.
- Label with your name, unit number, date and time of expression.

Sometimes practising this can help and you will soon be rewarded. There is a video on hand expression available at

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/hand-expression-video/>



Figure 1 shows hand expression

There are more details on how to hand express in the 'Off to a best start' leaflet downloadable at

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/off-to-the-best-start/>.

You can also discuss hand expression with a health professional.

How do I store my milk?

NICE (2008) recommend the following storage guidelines for breastmilk:

Storage guidelines for expressed milk (NICE, 2008)		
Where	Temperature	Time
Fridge	0-4 degrees	5 days
Freezer compartment of fridge	Not given	2 weeks
Freezer	-18 degrees	6 months

To defrost milk, thaw in the fridge and then use immediately.

When you come into hospital for the birth of your baby, bring your milk, in a cool bag with ice packs. There is a freezer to store your milk on the maternity unit.

If you have not been able to express during your pregnancy, a health professional can help you in hospital.

How do I feed my baby with a cup?

Cup feeding allows you to feed your baby without using a bottle and teat. Your baby will lap the milk from the cup and this helps to avoid nipple-teat confusion. You could also use a medicine spoon to give your baby expressed milk.

Follow these steps to cup feed your baby safely (Newman, 2009):

- Ensure your baby is awake and alert before starting the feed
- Pour some milk into a small cup

- Hold your baby close and upright on your lap, supporting your baby's head
- Hold the cup to your baby's lower lip and bring small amounts of milk slowly to their mouth. Allow your baby to take the milk into their mouth with their tongue (see figure 2)
- Go slowly, your baby will continually lap the milk

Do not pour the milk into your baby's mouth.



Figure 2 shows a baby being fed from a cup

Giving your baby breastmilk by a cup or spoon is a short term way to give your baby your milk. Continue to offer the breast to encourage baby to latch and breastfeed.

Can I find out more?

For more information about breastfeeding, you can go to:

The antenatal breastfeeding/Mom2Mom workshop

This is held every Thursday evening at 7pm to 9pm at Russells Hall Hospital in Maternity Outpatient Department.

We also hold the following:

Grandparents' evening

This covers a range of information including feeding. This is held on the first two Mondays of each month at 7pm to 9pm.

You can book either of these by contacting community midwives on 01384 244358 (10am to 12noon, Monday to Friday).

Useful websites:

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers

www.abm.me.uk

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

www.babyfriendly.org.uk

Breastfeeding Network

<http://breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/>

La Leche League GB

<https://www.laleche.org.uk/node>

National Breastfeeding Helpline

<http://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk/>

National Childbirth Trust (NCT)

<http://www.nct.org.uk/Start4Life>

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life>

References

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2008) *Maternal and child nutrition*. London: NICE. Available at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph11>

Newman, J (2009) *Information Sheet Finger and Cup Feeding*. Toronto: International Breastfeeding Centre. Available at:

https://nbc.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5:finger-and-cup-feeding&catid=5:information&Itemid=17

World Health Organisation (2003) *Global strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*. Geneva: WHO. Available at:

<http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/9241562218/en/>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Specialist Midwife Infant Feeding on 01384 456111 ext. 3887 or ask the switchboard to bleep 5050 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/maternity/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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