

How to Hand Express Colostrum Prenatally



Hand expressing colostrum during pregnancy increases parental confidence and promotes better milk production. Colostrum is the first milk your body produces. It is very nutritious and healthy for babies.

The milk collected during pregnancy can be used to feed the baby in case of difficulty breastfeeding or parent-baby separation at birth.

Doing hand expression of colostrum helps you have **more milk sooner**.

1 When can I start expressing my colostrum?

Please discuss with your health care provider before starting to express colostrum in pregnancy.

Generally, you can start expressing from 36 weeks on. You must stop expressing if you have painful contractions before 37 weeks. **Do not** express in pregnancy if you have placenta previa.



Do not use a breast pump.

2 What if I cannot express in pregnancy?

Don't worry! Focusing on hand expression **early and often in the first 24 hours after birth** will get your milk production off to a great start!



3 How often?

Week 36–37

- Express once daily for 5 minutes, switching back and forth between your breasts every 2 to 3 minutes.

Week 37 and beyond

- Express 3–4 times a day for 5–10 minutes, switching back and forth between your breasts every 2 to 3 minutes.

4 Collecting and storing your colostrum

Once you begin to see drops of colostrum on your nipple, start collecting! You can use a syringe or medicine cup to collect.



Colostrum can be collected every day in the same syringe. If using a medicine cup, use the syringe to “draw” up the colostrum from the medicine cup. You will need to store the capped syringe in the fridge between uses. **At the end of a day of collecting, freeze your colostrum.**

5 Identifying your syringes

Identify each of your syringes with a label provided by your health care provider. You can label your syringe immediately after expressing your colostrum or at the end of the day if you collect milk several times in the same syringe. The following information must appear on the label:

Jane Doe (Aug. 3, 1997)
May 15, 2024; 3:30pm

- The **first name, surname** and **date of birth of the biological parent** who expressed the milk;
- The **date** the milk was expressed.

At the end of the day, place your syringes in a ziplock style plastic bag and place them in the freezer.

6 Bringing your colostrum to the hospital

Bring your frozen colostrum to the hospital in a **cooler or in a bag of ice**. Tell your nurse that you have frozen colostrum. Your labelled frozen colostrum will be stored and available for you to use during your hospital stay. If your baby needs the colostrum, it will be thawed in the syringe and ready to use.



7 How much will I get?

Some people get a few drops, some get much more. Some people will not see any colostrum while hand expressing, and that's okay. Keep expressing! It will still help prepare your breasts for breastfeeding even if you do not see any colostrum.

If you find you are collecting a lot of colostrum, you can use clean food grade containers that are freezer safe to freeze your extra colostrum in.

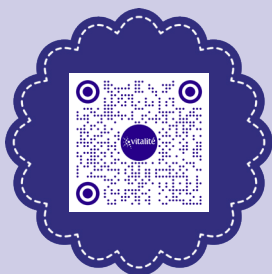
8 Will I still have colostrum when my baby comes?

Even if you don't get a drop, you are still activating your milk making cells, which will get your milk production off to a great start. If you are collecting a lot of colostrum, your body will still make colostrum after your baby arrives!



9 Learning how to hand express your colostrum

You can find the information in the book **Every Drop Counts: A Breastfeeding Guide for You and Your Family.**



Scan me!

For more information on prenatal expression of colostrum, visit www.moremilksooner.com