

## What is antenatal hand expression?

Antenatal hand expression is when you use your hands to express colostrum from your breasts. You can do this after 36 weeks of pregnancy.



## Why is this important?

Learning how to hand express your colostrum takes practice. Learning this skill will help you to make and collect more colostrum to give to your baby in the days after birth.

## What is colostrum?

Colostrum is the first milk your body makes. Colostrum is clear to golden yellow in colour. It is often called “liquid gold.” Colostrum is full of antibodies to strengthen your baby’s immune system. It is nutritious and easy to digest. Colostrum is the perfect first food for your baby.

## Is hand expression safe?

Yes, for most pregnancies, but there are some situations when it is not recommended. If you are having pregnancy complications, talk to your health-care provider before starting.

## How often can I express?

You can collect colostrum twice a day in the same syringe.

## How do I safely store my colostrum?

Store the capped syringe in the fridge between uses. Label the syringe with your name and your birth date. At the end of the collecting day, the capped syringe can be placed in a food safe bag and put in the freezer.

## How do I transport my frozen colostrum to the hospital?

If you were able to collect colostrum, bring your frozen colostrum syringes to the hospital when you give birth. Pack them in a cooler with ice packs. Give them to your nurse when you arrive. The nurse can store them in the freezer until you need them. They may also be stored in the fridge for up to three days.

## How do I hand express?

Steps of the process:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Gently massage your breast in a circular motion.
3. To start the milk flow, roll your nipple back and forth gently between your thumb and finger.
4. Put your hand on your breast making a C shape around your breast.
5. Gently push your thumb and fingers back towards your chest, then squeeze them together while you move them towards the nipple, "Press and release".
6. Move your fingers around the areola to express from different parts of the breast. Switch breasts after a few minutes.
7. If drops of colostrum appear on your nipple, put the syringe just under the drop and pull the plunger back slightly to draw it up.

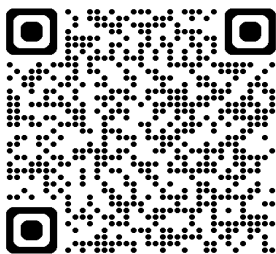


## Where can I buy feeding syringes to collect my colostrum?

The B.C. Women's Hospital cart and B.C. Children's gift store sell oral feeding syringes for colostrum collection.

## What if no colostrum comes out?

Some people may collect a drop or two of colostrum. Others may collect none. The most important thing is to practice this skill. Learning hand expression now will make it easier to express colostrum when your baby is born.



## To watch a video:

Scan the QR code to take you directly to the video or go to: <https://youtu.be/MMpRpjjoaTY>



# Antenatal Hand Expression

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