



IMPORTANT

- Hand expression is a valuable tool to learn to make breastfeeding easier.
- Feeding your baby hand expressed breast milk is healthier than using formula.

Breastfeeding Hand Expression

When would you hand express?

- To keep your breasts comfortable, if you are overfull or have a blocked duct.
- If you need to supplement your baby with extra milk.
- To maintain your milk supply if your baby cannot feed at the breast.
- To encourage your baby to suck by expressing drops of milk onto the nipple.
- To get some expressed breast milk for someone to use when you are going out or to get some for storage purposes.

Why is hand expression a good idea?

- It is a skill that can make breastfeeding easier.
- It is convenient, natural, skin to skin.
- If your baby cannot feed at the breast or your baby temporarily requires a supplement, your breast milk is healthier for your baby than formula.
- Hand expression takes practice to learn; in the first days expect drops, later sprays, then 30-200 mls each time.

How to hand express:

- Warm your breast with a shower or a hot, wet towel.
- Wash your hands.
- Find a comfortable position and think about your baby.
- Massage your breast in a circular pattern for a minute or so towards the nipple.
- Feel back from your nipple to find a place where your breast feels different; this may feel like peas in a pod.
- Place your thumb on one side of the breast above the nipple and 2-3 fingers directly opposite so that the thumb and the fingers are in a straight line.
- Press your thumb and fingers back towards your chest and then press your thumb and fingers towards each other, moving the milk towards the

nipple. Release and repeat the pressure until the milk starts to come.

- A rhythmic motion of expression can be helpful to express milk.
- Repeat in all parts of the breast, moving your fingers around the breast to compress different ducts.

Keeping your milk clean and safe:

- Use glass or plastic containers with a leak proof lid or milk collection bags.
- It is best to wash containers in hot soapy water and rinse with the hottest water. Air dry.
- Expressed milk has properties to keep it fresh and safe for feeding. (See Collection and Storage of Breast Milk)

Adapted from BFI 20-Hour Course for Maternity Staff
The La Leche League Answer Book
The Miracle Food
Dr. Jack Newman's Guide to Breastfeeding