

# Expressing early milk & colostrum

### Make the first hours after birth count

**Skin-to-skin** contact & frequent nipple stimulation are important signals that help encourage milk production.

Heat, massage & close contact will help to **boost mothers' milk supply**.



### Reassure mothers

Hand expression is shown to improve breastfeeding rates. The University of California, San Francisco, found **97%** of new mothers who practiced hand expressing during the 1st days postpartum, were still breastfeeding 2 months later compared with **72%** of mothers who used an electric breast pump.

### Encourage hand expression

Expressing stimulates breasts to make & release milk. Useful when a mother's breasts are feeling extra full, to self manage engorgement, blocked ducts & symptoms of mastitis, if unexpectedly **separated from baby**, or to increase milk supply.



The more often mothers can hand express in the first three days after birth, the better their milk supply.

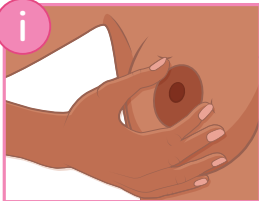
## Clinical Pearls

Patient Resource

### How to express colostrum by hand

It takes time to learn but is a useful tool to add to a mother's breastfeeding toolkit.

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**Wash hands** first.

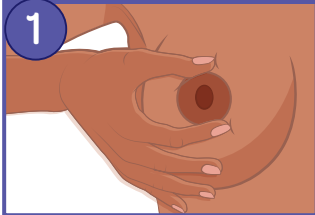
Begin with **gentle breast massage** to stimulate oxytocin release.

Hold your hand in a **C-shape**, as if you were holding a cup.

Your nipple should be in a line between the pads of your thumb & your first/index finger about 0.5 to 1 inches (2-3cm) back from the base of the nipple.  
You may find it easier to cup your breast with your other hand for extra support.

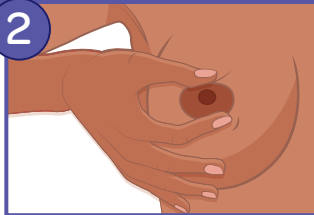
Follow these 3 comfortable steps

1



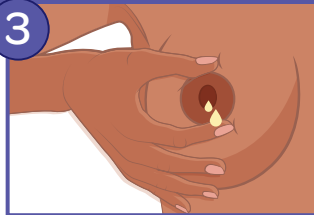
**Press** back towards the chest wall.

2



**Compress** the pads of your fingers together.

3



Gently **squeeze & release** several times. Keep repeating until milk begins to flow. This may take a few minutes.

When the flow slows down, move your fingers round to express a different part of the breast. Repeat the squeeze, release process. Repeat this for your other breast.

Lansinoh.