

# expressing milk

## What does 'expressing milk' mean?

- Expressing milk means squeezing milk out of your breast.
- You can express milk by hand or with a hand pump or an electric pump.
- Different pumps suit different women, so ask for information to compare them.
- A pump needs to be clean and sterilised each time it is used.

## Why express milk?

If you express milk, your baby will still be able to have mum's milk even if somebody else is feeding them.

This may be useful if you are away from your baby or returning to work.

It's best to wait until your baby is a little older before regularly expressing milk for your partner to feed your baby, so you have a chance to get feeding going well first.

## Why express by hand?

If your breasts feel uncomfortably full.

If your baby isn't sucking well but you still want to give him mum's milk.

If you don't want to buy or use a pump to express milk.

In the first few days it is easier to express by hand.

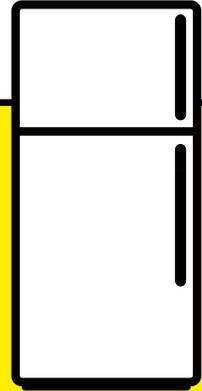
## How to express milk by hand

1. Have a clean sterilised container to hand before you start.
2. Cup your breast and feel back from the end of the nipple to where the texture of your breast feels different.
3. Using your thumb and the rest of your fingers in a C shape, gently squeeze this area – this shouldn't hurt.
4. Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. At first, only drops will appear, but just keep going as it will help build up your supply. With practice and a little more time, milk will flow freely.
5. When the flow slows down, move your fingers round to try a different section of your breast and repeat. When that flow slows down, swap to the other breast. Keep changing breasts until the milk is dripping very slowly or stops altogether.
6. If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away, and try a gentle breast massage.



## Storing milk

- Remember to use a sterilised container to put the milk in.
- You can store mum's milk in the fridge for up to 5 days at 4°C or lower (usually at the back, never in the door).
- Mum's milk can be stored for 2 weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to 6 months in a freezer.
- Defrost frozen mum's milk in the fridge. Once thawed, use it straight away.
- If your baby prefers, you can warm the milk up to body temperature before feeding. Never heat milk in the microwave as it can cause hot spots which can burn your baby's mouth.



## Expressing milk for a baby who is premature or ill

If your baby has to stay in hospital, it is important to start expressing your milk as soon as possible after your baby is born.

In order to ensure that you produce plenty of milk, you will need to express at least 8 times over 24 hours, including during the night.

Ask the hospital staff about holding your baby in skin-to-skin contact. This can help with bonding and keeping up your milk supply.

If you are freezing mum's milk because your baby is premature or ill, ask the staff caring for your baby for advice.

