



**HUTT maternity**

Hutt Valley Maternity Care

**Antenatal Hand Expressing  
and Storing Colostrum for  
your baby**  
Information for women

## Reasons for expressing

Colostrum is the perfect nutrition for babies. It is the first type of breastmilk mothers produce and contains many antibodies which help protect babies from disease.

Some babies will benefit from having extra colostrum/breastmilk available when they are born; this may include babies that will be born early, have a cleft lip, palate, or other medical conditions. Mothers with Type 1, 2 and gestational diabetes, mothers who have had previous breast surgery or breastfeeding difficulties or other medical conditions who wish to have extra colostrum available to supplement their babies may also wish to express antenatally.

## When and how do I express?

- Start expressing at about 36 weeks, 5 minutes on each breast.
- You could practise in the bath or shower initially.
- When you start collecting colostrum express after the bath or shower when the breasts are warm.
- Wash your hands
- Follow technique as shown in handout.
- Your colostrum will probably flow quite slowly.
- If difficult to collect your colostrum with syringes, express into a small clean container

e.g. a cup and draw the colostrum up with the syringe.

- You can express up to three times in the same day.
- If you plan to express again that day, place the container in the coldest part of the fridge, usually at the back.
- IF UTERINE CRAMPS OCCUR, STOP EXPRESSING AND DISCUSS WITH LMC AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

### **How do i store my colostrum?**

You will be supplied with 1ml, 3ml, and 5ml syringes to collect the drops of colostrum. Draw the drops of colostrum up into the syringe as they are expressed. You can keep using the same syringe over the day, storing it in a clean container in the fridge in between collections. Avoid overfilling the syringe. Put the cap on, label the syringe at the end of the day and place in the freezer.

Inform your LMC and hospital that frozen colostrum will be bought in at the time of the birth.

### **Taking your colostrum to hospital**

Bring your frozen and labelled colostrum to delivery suite when you are admitted. Ask the Midwife looking after you to put it in the freezer straight away so it does not defrost.

Staff will document in your notes that there is frozen colostrum available.

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## Using your colostrum

When your baby is born have skin to skin contact with him or her for as long as possible as this will stabilise their breathing, heart rate, temperature and encourage them to breastfeed. Your Midwife can assist you with breastfeeding and will encourage you to breastfeed your baby whenever baby shows feeding signs. She will guide you on when you can use the colostrum you have collected antenatally.

When your frozen colostrum is needed it will be thawed in small amounts and given to your baby using a syringe or cup. We try to avoid using bottles and teats as they can interfere with how baby latches at the breast. If you are diabetic try to use all the colostrum over the first 1-2 days, even if your baby's blood sugar levels are normal, as this is the time your baby is most at risk. If there is more than baby needs it will be used on those busy second and third nights!

## Further support and advice

If you need further equipment, support and advice, ask your midwife. You can also contact the Lactation Consultants at Hutt Valley DHB: 04 587 2556.