



Breastfeeding Committee for Saskatchewan

www.thebcs.ca

Important:

Moms who hand express within the first hour of birth have been shown to have milk come in sooner and have more of it!

If a supplement is needed, breastmilk is the optimal form of nutrition for your baby

For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified
Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support
Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

References:

<https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html>

<https://globalhealthmedia.org/por>

Hand Expression

All mothers can learn to massage and compress their breasts to stimulate and collect breast milk. Once learned, many women prefer hand expression to pumping. It is also more effective than pumping to remove your valuable colostrum.

When to hand express?

- To build your milk supply
- To store milk for later use or to donate
- To soften your breasts if you are overfull or have a blocked duct
- In the rare instance that a medication may not be compatible with breastfeeding
- If you have made the decision to partially or exclusively express and provide your milk by bottle or cup.

How to hand express:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water
- Gather a clean container. A wide opening may be easier to catch the milk.
- Massage your breast using a circular motion for a minute or two.
- Place your thumb and finger on either side of the nipple (about an inch away from the nipple)
- Press your thumb and fingers back towards your chest and then press your thumb and fingers towards each other. This will move your milk towards the nipple
- Release and repeat until the milk starts to come. When the milk in that area subsides, rotate around another area of the breast. Avoid sliding your fingers along your skin, which can be painful

Tips for success:

- Find a comfortable position and think about your baby
- A rhythmic motion of expression and working on all areas of the breast can be helpful. Warm compresses may help your milk flow.
- Hand express for *about* 10 minutes per session if you are working to build your milk supply. At least 8-10 sessions in 24 hours are recommended, with at least one session overnight
- Once your milk has come in, hand expression will not take long; try to express for about 2 minutes past the last drops of milk
- You may express more milk by alternating breasts more than once during a session

Video links to show how easy hand expression can be:

1. <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html>
2. <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/how-to-express-breastmilk/>

