

HAND EXPRESSION



Hand Expression is a valuable skill for parents to learn. It can help increase and maintain milk supply and make breasts feel more comfortable. Starting Hand Expression in the first hour after birth and continuing after each feeding can help establish a good milk supply in the early days after birth.

Hand expression can:

1. Provide expressed breast milk to offer to baby while they are learning to breastfeed effectively
2. Soften the areola to help baby latch
3. Lessen the discomfort of overfull breasts
4. Help maintain milk supply if separated from baby or unable to feed baby directly at the breast
5. Be used as an alternative to a breast pump, which is convenient and can save money
6. Make breasts more comfortable in a parent who has made the informed decision not to breastfeed

Expressed milk can be offered by cup, spoon or syringe. Your nurse can help you learn how to hand express and feed expressed breast milk to your baby.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-800-361-5653

TTY: 1-866-512-6228

york.ca/breastfeeding

For more information, visit
york.ca/breastfeeding



1. Wash your hands
2. Sit up and lean slightly forward
3. Gently massage your breast or use a warm towel to help get the milk flowing. Seeing or hearing your baby also helps
4. Place your fingers and thumb behind the areola in a "C" shape (nipple in the centre)
5. Press back towards your chest. Gently compress your thumb and fingers together and towards nipple. Then release
6. Collect drops of milk in a clean cup, spoon, or syringe to feed your baby or store for later
7. Repeat (press back, compress, relax) and move fingers around your breast
8. Alternate breasts and repeat
9. Express until milk stops flowing

For your healthy term baby, please clean the spoon and cup with hot soapy water before first use, and after all subsequent uses. If your baby is premature, or in the Special Care Nursery, please speak with your nurse about cleaning and feeding instructions. It is normal to not get any milk at first. You may only get a few drops to a teaspoon initially. The more you hand express over time, the easier it will become and the more milk you will get.

Illustrations adapted with permission from the Best Start Resource Centre. Content adapted with permission from Sudbury and District Health Unit September 2017.

For more information on breastfeeding and supports available in York Region, as well as access to a video on how to hand express, please visit our website at [**york.ca/breastfeeding**](http://york.ca/breastfeeding)