

Baby's First Milk: COLOSTRUM

Right after birth, you are producing a special milk, colostrum. The amount of colostrum matches the tiny size of your baby's tummy. Only you can provide this unique nutrition and protection for your baby.



Why is colostrum so important?

- Colostrum protects your baby against infection and disease.
- It is easy for your baby to digest.
- It provides the nutrition that your baby needs in about one teaspoon per feeding.

As your baby's tummy grows, he will want to nurse more frequently. Your milk production is based on the amount of milk your infant takes from the breast. Nursing when your baby shows hunger cues will help you produce the perfect amount of milk for your baby.

Important Tips for Making Enough Milk

- Practice skin-to-skin care and breastfeed your baby within 60 minutes after birth.
- Nurse your baby at the first signs of hunger – sucking on his hands or searching for your breast.
- Keep your baby near you 24 hours a day. This will allow for more feedings.
- The more you nurse, the more milk you will make.
- If you have concerns, ask for help from a lactation consultant or a breastfeeding counselor.
- Your breasts will NOT feel full during the first few days. This is normal.

BABIES may be extra sleepy in the first few days or need more time to practice breastfeeding. Hand expression allows you to collect colostrum so that your infant does not miss out on the unique benefits.

TO HAND EXPRESS:

- Wash your hands before expressing your milk.
- Use a clean container with a wide opening or a spoon to collect your colostrum.
- Gently massage breasts to stimulate milk flow.
- Hold the clean container near your breast. With your other hand, place your fingers and thumb about one inch behind the nipple in a C-shape.
 1. Gently press your finger and thumb back toward your ribs
 2. Press your finger and thumb together.
 3. Relax your hand.
 4. Repeat the process and alternate breasts.
- Be patient. It may take a few minutes of repeating this process before you see any colostrum. This is normal. Remember that your baby only needs about one teaspoon per feeding during the first few days.

In the first days, hand expression is preferred over pumping. Colostrum is thick and sticky and may stick to the pump parts causing the loss of precious drops.



To see an example of hand expression go to
<http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/HandExpression.html>



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