

Hand Expression

Hand expression in the first hour after birth and continuing after each feeding helps establish a good milk supply, even when breastfeeding is going well.

Hand expression can:

- 1 Provide baby with a taste of milk to get them interested in feeding.
- 2 Soften the areola to help baby to latch.
- 3 Lessen the discomfort of overfull breasts.
- 4 Help maintain milk supply if separated from baby or unable to feed baby directly from the breast.
- 5 Save money for the cost of a breast pump.



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





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. 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. This is the perfect amount for your new baby’s small tummy size in those first few days. The more you hand express over time, the easier it will become and the more milk you will get.

For more information, visit
york.ca/breastfeeding

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

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York Region Health Connection