

# Establishing and Maintaining Breast Milk Supply

## Information for parents

Early and frequent expressing is very important. You are not only providing milk for your baby but also setting your lactation up to be able to provide enough milk for your baby's growing needs.

### Guidelines for expressing breast milk

<b>START</b>	As soon as possible after delivery if possible within a few hours.
<b>HOW OFTEN</b>	About 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. More often if your supply decreases. The more you express the more milk you will make. It does not have to be regular, flexibility makes it easier for you.
<b>HOW LONG</b>	20 – 30 minutes or until the milk flow is reduced to a few drops. Switch breasts frequently during pumping.
<b>HOW MUCH</b>	<u>A rough guide is approximately</u> 300ml by day 5, 500ml from day 7 to 14, then 800 ml by week 3 to 4. If you have twins aim for a 24hr total of 1000mls.
<b>METHODS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hand expression until milk comes in. Collect the colostrum by syringe so this can be given to your baby where possible.</li><li>- Breast pump manual. If your baby is born at 35 weeks or less and is in Newborn Services we will provide you with a pump for your own use</li><li>- Breast pump electric – these are available for your use. It is important that you are shown how to use the equipment. The manual pump you have been given converts for use on the medula electric pumps. We encourage you to express by your baby's cot/incubator. There are screens available for privacy if you wish. You may express in the 'Mother's Only Room' in the Parent Infant Nursery.</li></ul>

If you wish to have an electric breast pump for home use you will need to hire one. FLN or ParentCare have a list of suppliers.

## **Storage**

- Up to 4 hours at room temperature, however it is best to refrigerate as soon as possible.
- Five days in the fridge however, if it is not going to be used it should be frozen within 48 hours.
- Three months in front opening freezer.
- Six months in chest freezer.
- If anything is added to breast milk it preferably should be used within 4hrs – no longer than 12hrs
- Once defrosted use breast milk within 24 hours.
- Always try to give your baby fresh breast milk if possible.

## **Helpful Hints**

- Wash your hands before commencing.
- Sterilise breast pump according to manufacturers instructions.
- Massage breasts gently before commencing expressing.
- Apply warmth to breast before pumping.
- Hand expressing is an excellent method of expressing.
- Have something to drink or eat while expressing.
- Relax and think about your baby – a photo may help.
- The 24 hour total is what is important. Each expressing may yield a different amount.
- Every couple of weeks increase number of expressions (1-3 times) to help boost supply for 1-2 days.
- Seek help from your Midwife, Nurse or Lactation Consultant if you have concerns.

**You are doing a wonderful job!**

**Expressing is hard work but can be very rewarding!**

This leaflet provides a guide only. If you have concerns or want more information about your baby, ask the doctor or nurse providing your baby's care.