

## EXPRESSING YOUR BREASTMILK.

There are three main methods of expressing your breastmilk (by hand, using a hand pump or using an electric pump) but whichever method you choose always remember to wash your hands first. All containers, bottles and pump pieces used must be sterilised before use.

### TO ENCOURAGE YOUR MILK TO FLOW.

- Make yourself comfortable and relax.
- If possible have your baby near, if not possible a photograph will help.
- Massage your breast by gently rolling your closed fist towards your nipple. Work around the whole breast, including underneath.

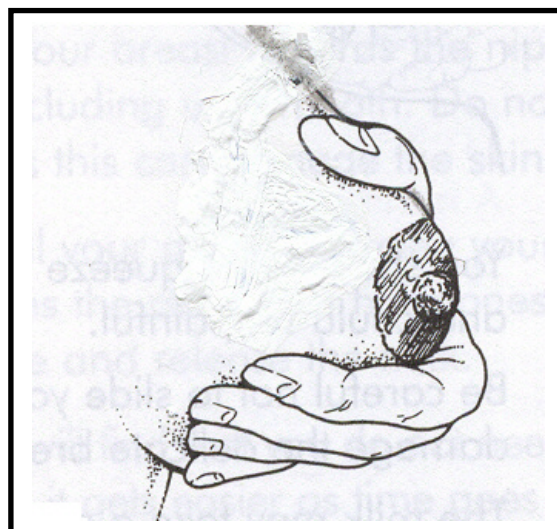
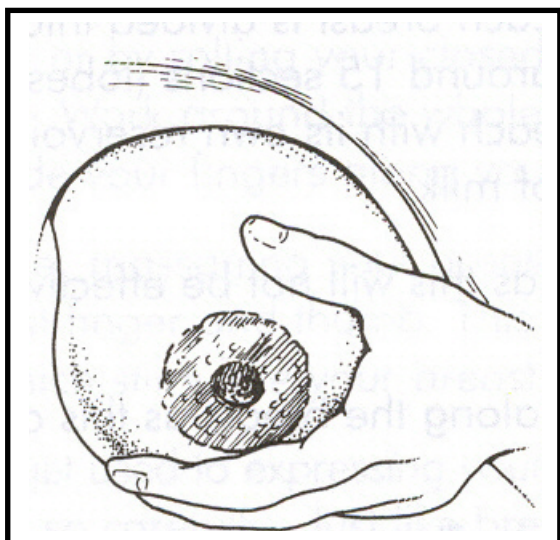
### HAND EXPRESSING.

This is an easy, cheap way of expressing milk. A large mouthed sterile container will be needed to collect the breastmilk. The dark skin around the nipple (the areola) contains milk ducts. These often feel like small peas underneath the skin. The milk collects in these ducts and is expressed from here.

- Do not squeeze the nipple. It may become painful and is ineffective.
- Be careful not to damage the breast tissue by sliding your fingers along the breast.
- The milk may take time to flow.
- It is important to ensure that the milk is expressed from all the ducts.

### How to express by hand.

1. Place your thumb on top of your breast, towards the edge of the areola, and your first fingers underneath, making a C shape.
2. Keeping your thumb and fingers in this position gently and carefully press backwards.
3. At the same time, press your thumb and fingers together and forwards, easing the milk out of the ducts.
4. Release the pressure to allow the ducts to refill and then repeat steps 2 and 3 again.
5. You will need to rotate your finger and thumb positions to empty all of the other ducts.



## HAND PUMPS

There are a number of different hand pumps on the market; some operate by hand and some by battery. They all have a funnel that fits over the nipple and areola.

## ELECTRIC PUMPS

These are particularly useful if you need to express for an extended length of time e.g. if your baby is on the Special Baby Care Unit. If this is the case you will need to express 3 hourly/ 6-8 times in 24 hours including at least once during the night to maintain your milk supply. It is possible to express from both breasts together using an electric pump if required. You will require two expressing sets.

## STORING YOUR BREASTMILK AT HOME.

Breastmilk can be stored in a fridge for up to 24 hours. Store breastmilk in the back of the fridge not in the door.

Breastmilk can also be stored in a freezer for up to 3 months. For freezing breastmilk any plastic container can be used as long as it has an airtight seal and can be sterilised. Date and label each container so that you can use them in rotation. When freezing breastmilk for premature or ill babies ask the staff who is caring for them for advice. If your freezer is self-defrosting, store the milk as far away from the defrosting element as possible.

Thaw frozen breastmilk slowly in the fridge. You can then either allow the breastmilk to reach room temperature and feed your baby immediately or warm it directly from the fridge. Do not defrost or warm breastmilk in a microwave as the milk may reheat unevenly and burn your baby's mouth. To check that the milk is at the required temperature test on the inside of your wrist. Breastmilk should be used within 24 hours and never refrozen.

Your midwife or health visitor will help if you need any more information about feeding your baby. You can also contact one of the following organisations:

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers 020 7813 1481

Breastfeeding Network 0870 900 8787

La Leche League 020 7242 1278

National Childbirth Trust 0870 444 8708

[www.babyfriendly.org.uk](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk)

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