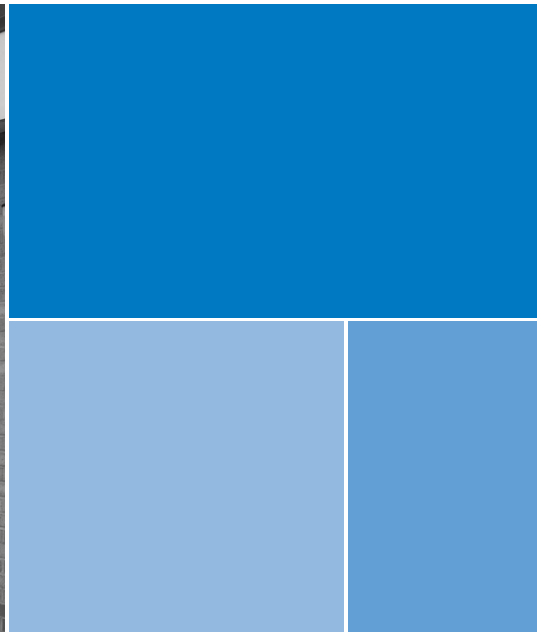


Collection and storage of colostrum



Information for Patients

Expressing and storage of your colostrum

Breastmilk is beneficial to a newborn because it contains the correct nutrients and protective factors for the baby's age. Colostrum is the milk produced in the first few days after birth. It is a concentrated fluid and comes in small amounts so your baby's immature digestive system and kidneys can absorb the nutrients. Colostrum also has a laxative effect on the newborn which helps to minimise jaundice by assisting in the passing of meconium (your baby's first stools).

Most babies need some time to learn how to attach and feed well from the breast. The purpose of expressing and storing colostrum prior to birth is for those babies who may be at risk of low sugar levels or mothers who may need to stimulate their milk supply.

This information has been provided for women who may have the following conditions and situations:

- Women with diabetes in pregnancy (pre-existing or gestational)
- Babies diagnosed with cleft lip or palate during the antenatal period
- Women with breast hypoplasia (a condition where there is insufficient glandular breast tissue, making breastfeeding difficult)
- Women with polycystic ovarian disease
- Women who have multiple sclerosis
- Women who have had breast surgery affecting milk ducts
- A strong family history of dairy intolerance or inflammatory bowel disease.

It is our intention to help you to plan for your baby's birth and support you through the process of expressing your colostrum. This information will help you decide whether you wish to obtain your colostrum, but if you have any questions, you can contact:

Our Infant Feeding Coordinator: 01493 453076

Breast feeding and Diabetes

Research shows that babies who are breastfed are less likely to develop childhood diabetes. It is thought that cow's milk, the main ingredient of the formula milk, can trigger diabetes in some babies; this is probably more likely for your baby if you or your partner have diabetes. Therefore, it is very important that mothers who are diabetic avoid giving their baby formula milk if at all possible until the baby is at least six months old.

Babies of women with diabetes can in the first few hours after birth have low blood sugar and they will need a little extra milk to correct this. Early and frequent feeds will be encouraged to help prevent your baby becoming unwell. It is also very helpful if you have already expressed some of your colostrum so that it can be given to your baby, if extra milk is needed. It will help to avoid giving your baby formula milk should they require any additional feeds.

If you have diabetes and are insulin dependent, you may find that your insulin requirements are lower when you are breastfeeding and that you need to eat more. If you have gestational diabetes research has shown that you are less likely to go on to develop diabetes in later life if you breastfeed your baby.

Other conditions

Expressing colostrum can get breast feeding off to a good start and help with milk production. If you have any concerns that you may not be able to breastfeed please discuss this with your midwife or Infant Feeding Specialist Midwife.

How to express your colostrum

Hand expressing colostrum simply means gently squeezing milk out of your breast. It should not be painful either before, during or after expressing and the following tips may help:

- Start by getting comfortable. Ensuring you are as relaxed as possible.
- It may be helpful to shower or have a bath before expressing to warm your breast tissue. Alternatively you can use some warm cloths applied to your breasts and gently massage your breast prior to expressing as a way of stimulating the flow of colostrum.
- Cup your breast with your hand in a 'C' shape with 4 fingers under the breast 1-2cm away from nipple and the thumb 1-2cm above the nipple.
- Using your thumb and index finger, gently squeeze this area – this should not hurt.
- Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. Milk should start to flow. Because the first milk (colostrum) is very concentrated, it is thick, and will come out of your breast drop by drop.
- If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away, find the spot that works best for you.
- When the flow slows down, move your fingers around the breast, (like moving around the numbers on a clock face), so that you have expressed the milk from all the way around your breast.
- Repeat the procedure and express from the other breast.

Note

You may find that when you express, you feel your tummy going hard and relaxing. This is called 'Braxton Hicks' contractions. Do not worry about these, unless they begin to feel like regular

period type cramps or mild labour contractions. This is rare, but if this happens, you should stop expressing and rest. If they continue and you are concerned please phone the Central Delivery Suite on 01493 452480.

When and how often can I express?

You can start to express from week 37 of your pregnancy for no more than 3-5 minutes at one time, 2-3 times a day.

How to store expressed colostrum

You will need to collect the milk into a sterile syringe or if easier use a sterile container first and then draw up into a syringe. A member of staff will provide you with a selection of small syringes that you can use to store the milk in. The syringe needs to be labelled with your name, the date and time you expressed. You can store your milk in the fridge at a temperature of 2-4°C and keep adding to it for up to 48 hours. After 48 hours, you should place the syringe(s) in a clean zip-lock bag and place in your freezer at a temperature of -18°C.

When to bring your colostrum into hospital

If in established labour or having a planned caesarean, please bring the frozen colostrum with you in a cool bag to keep as frozen as possible. Once the stored colostrum has thawed, it must be used within 24 hours but should remain chilled at all times.

If having induction of labour please leave your colostrum at home in your freezer until you know you are in established labour, then ask your birthing partner to bring it into the hospital.

Please let the midwife caring for you know that you have colostrum as soon as you arrive and she will arrange for it to be stored in the designated fridge or freezer.

How much colostrum will I produce?

This will vary from woman to woman and anything from a few drops to a teaspoon is normal. This small amount is perfect for your new baby because it is very concentrated and packed with protective factors.

For further information go to:

www.babyfriendly.org.uk

www.bestbeginnings.info

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

www.jpaget.nhs.uk/departments-services/departments-services-a-z/maternity-services/breastfeeding/

For breastfeeding support contact:

Infant Feeding Coordinator/Midwife at James Paget Maternity

01493 453076

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

Courtesy and respect

- A welcoming and positive attitude
- Polite, friendly and interested in people
- Value and respect people as individuals
So people feel **welcome**

Attentively kind and helpful

- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
- Attentive, responsive & take time to help
- Visible presence of staff to provide care
So people feel **cared for**

Responsive communication

- Listen to people & answer their questions
- Keep people clearly informed
- Involve people
So people feel **in control**

Effective and professional

- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
- Effective care / services from joined up teams
- Organised and timely, looking to improve
So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240

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