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Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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Maximising Your Milk Supply

Neonatal Intensive Care

Patient Information

Maximising Your Milk Supply

Expressing milk for your baby

Whether your long term plans are to breastfeed exclusively or to transfer onto bottles of formula at a later stage, think of your breastmilk as a medicine. It is full of antibodies to help protect your baby and is the perfect balance of nutrition to help your baby grow and develop. We strongly advise and request that while your baby is in NICU you express your breastmilk for your baby to give them the greatest start in life, help them grow, thrive and protect them from infections.

Getting started

Ideally you should start expressing within 2 hours and definitely within 6 hours of birth.

Express a MINIMUM of 8 times in 24 hours but you cannot express too much.

Between 2am and 4am, your prolactin (milk making hormone) is at its highest and it is really important to express at this time.
A combination of hand expressing and using the electric pump on the INITIATE setting right from the beginning opens up your lactocytes (milk making cells) and leads to the greatest amounts of milk. Ask your nurse or midwife to show you how to hand express/ use the pump and ensure someone has checked your technique.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.
If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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References

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Morton, J., Wong, R. J., Hall, J. Y., Pang, W.W., Lai, C.T., Lui, J., Hartmann, P.E., & Rhine, W. D. (2012). Combining hand techniques with electric pumping increases the caloric content of milk in mothers of preterm infants. Journal of Perinatology, 32, 791-796

Hill, P. D., Aldag, J. C., Chatterton, R. T., & Zinaman, M. (2005). Primary and secondary mediators' influence on milk output in lactating mothers of preterm and term infants. J Hum Lact, 21(2), 138-150.

LactMed online Drugs and Lactation database: https://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm

Enjoy skin to skin and express next to your baby to help establish a good supply. If you express away from your baby, have something that smells of them and a photo.

Look after yourself. Sufficient rest, hydration and food can make a huge difference to your milk supply.

When your milk comes in

Your breastmilk starts as colostrum in very tiny volumes of 1ml or less. The volume starts to increase by about day 3-4. At this time start using the MAINTAIN setting on the breast pump.

Continue to express a minimum of 8-10 times in 24 hours. You can express like a baby naturally feeds. For example after 1 hour, 2 hours, 1 hour, 4 hours etc. One 5 hour gap is fine but expressing between 2am and 4am is crucial to maintain your milk supply.

By day 10-14 you should be aiming for volumes of 750-1000ml in a 24 hour period and at this time you can reduce the number of times you express to 6-8 times in 24 hours.

When mothers use their hands as well as their pump to express milk, they can pump an average of 48 percent more milk than the pump alone can remove. This milk also contains twice as much fat as when mothers used only the pump.

Using your hands while you pump

To do hands-on pumping, follow these steps:

1. First, massage both breasts.
2. Double pump, compressing your breasts as much as you can while pumping. (Search “hands free pumping” online for pumping bras or cut holes in an old bra.) Continue until milk flow slows to a trickle.
3. Massage your breasts again, concentrating on any areas that feel full.
4. Finish by either hand expressing your milk into the pump’s funnel or single pumping while compressing your breast. Move back and forth from breast to breast several times until you’ve drained both breasts as fully as possible.

The routine should take just 20-25 minutes. Watch this short online video for a demonstration:

http://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html

Hands-on pumping can be used by any mother who wants to improve her pumping milk yield or boost her milk production.

If your milk supply drops

If your supply drops below 750ml in 24 hours, you can take steps to increase the volume again.

Ensure you are eating, drinking and resting enough. Stress can also have an impact so ask for help from your nurse, friends and relatives.

Increase the frequency of times you express in 24 hours to 10-12 times and make sure you are expressing between 2am-4am.

Use your hands while pumping to remove milk more effectively.

An emptier breast gives feedback to the brain to make more milk.

There is a herbal galactagogue (increases milk supply) called FENUGREEK. This can be taken in the form of tea or capsules (3 capsules, 3 times a day). It can be purchased from health food shops. N.B. contraindications include women who have Diabetes Mellitus or who are taking warfarin. Please seek advice from your G.P. if you are in any doubt.

You should see an increase within 72 hours.

If your supply does not reach 750ml after 14 days post partum or your supply drops and does not increase after taking the above steps, talk to your nurse about Domperidone. This is a medication that is prescribed by your GP and can help increase your milk supply if you are expressing sufficient times in 24 hours.