

## **Expressing for a Baby**

### **Common questions asked by mothers**

#### **When should I start to express?**

It is important to start expressing as soon as possible, ideally within the first six hours.

#### **Why is it best to hand express for the first couple of days?**

It is best to hand express for the first couple of days because less milk is lost with hand expressing than with a pump.

#### **When can I start to use a pump?**

Gradually over the next few days your milk will increase and once you are expressing on average 7mls per session, you can then go over to double pumping with an electric pumping.

#### **Why double pump?**

Double pumping will increase the volume of milk produced and the amount of fat in the milk. You may find that using an old bra with holes in the right places helps to hold it in place. Make sure you are using the correct size funnel and the funnel is not digging into your breast as this may impede the flow. Expressing should be pain free.

#### **How often should I express?**

To ensure a good supply you should express early and often, at least, 8-10 times in 24 hours including at least once during the night.

#### **Why do I need to express at night?**

The hormone that produces milk is highest during the night. Therefore it is important that you express at least once during the night to ensure a good supply. There should be no gap longer than 6 hours at night.

#### **Why do I need to massage before expressing?**

Massage for at least 3-5 minutes before expressing. Massaging stimulates your let down reflex and will help to drain the breast effectively. If your baby is in Special Care have a picture of the baby nearby will help the let down reflex.

#### **How long do I need to express?**

If you are using an electric pump, start the vacuum on the lowest setting and gradually increase until you feel comfortable. Be aware, too high a suction can be as bad as too little suction. Express until all your milk available is removed and then for another two minutes after.

The most important determining factor for your milk supply is the 24 hour volume at two weeks. You are aiming to get the volume around 750mls - 1000ml/day by two weeks.

### CHART FOR MOTHERS EXPRESSING

If you want to keep a record of how much you are expressing,  
please complete the chart below.

Date	Time	Volume
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
	9	
	10	