

# How to Hand Express

Start by making sure that your hands are clean and that you have a sterile container/syringe before you start. Get comfortable ensuring that you are as relaxed as possible. To help the milk flow it can be useful to shower or have a bath before expressing.

**Step 1**



Start with a gentle breast and nipple massage to stimulate the hormones needed to release milk.

**Step 2**



Position your thumb and fingers in a 'C' shape, 2 -3cm back from the base of your nipple.

**Step 3**



Gently press and release, press and release, and keep repeating to build up your rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin or pinching the nipple which may result in your breast becoming sore.

If you don't see any colostrum after a few minutes, do not worry as expressing takes time and practice.

Try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away; find the spot that works best for you.

Because colostrum is very concentrated, it is thick, and will come out of your breast drop by drop.

**Step 4**



If there is still no colostrum, keep expressing in a comfortable rhythm for a few minutes as the stimulation will encourage your body to increase production.

If it does flow but slows, move your fingers round to a different part of the breast and start again.

Aim to express from both breasts at least twice each session. You only need to express for 5 – 10 minutes per breast. This will provide enough stimulation to the body.

If you wish to see hand expressing online please visit:

[www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly/Resources/AudioVideo/Hand-expression/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly/Resources/AudioVideo/Hand-expression/)