

# YOUR GUIDE TO Prenatal Colostrum Collection

*Take the first step in providing the gift of colostrum to your baby.*



## Benefits of Prenatal Colostrum Collection

- **Confidence in breastfeeding skills:** Practicing colostrum collection can help you become familiar with your breasts and how they work, boosting your confidence in breastfeeding.
- **Familiarity with your breasts and how they work:** Understanding your breast anatomy helps you express milk more effectively.
- **Supplementation:** If your baby needs extra feeds, you can use your colostrum instead of formula milk.
- **Antibodies and immunity:** Colostrum provides essential antibodies and boosts your baby's immunity.
- **Shorter interval for milk to come in:** Your milk may come in faster, which benefits both you and your baby.
- **Medical conditions:** Colostrum is especially beneficial for babies born by cesarean birth, with low blood sugars, prematurity, low birth weight, multiples, or if the birth parent has preeclampsia, hypertension or diabetes.



## Supplies for Collecting Colostrum

- **Containers:** Find these at the Overlake Parent and Baby Care Center boutique.
- **Clean spoon or small cup,** like a medicine cup.
- **Small syringe** or colostrum collector.
- **Ziploc bags.**
- **Labels:** Write your name and the date you collected the colostrum.

### Colostrum kits:

Make a prenatal lactation appointment and get a small, starter colostrum kit for free. Or, stop by our Parent Baby Care Center boutique and purchase a small or large kit.



## Storing Colostrum

- **Room temperature:** four hours.
- **Refrigerator:** four days.
- **Freezer:** six months.
- **Thawed milk:** Use within 24 hours if thawed in the fridge and within two hours if at room temperature.

### Bringing colostrum to the hospital:

You can freeze your colostrum and bring it in a cool bag with ice packs when you go to have your baby. Be sure to let your nurse know if you brought the colostrum to the hospital, so it may be properly stored.



## Frequency

- **Week 36:** Express once a day for five minutes.
- **Week 37 onward:** Express three to four times a day for five to 10 minutes, switching breasts every two to three minutes.
- **Collecting colostrum:** Collect colostrum in the same syringe throughout the day. Store in the fridge at the end of the day. Label the syringe and put it in a Ziploc bag.

*(Over for more.)*



## How to Hand Express

1. **Wash your hands.**
2. **Hand position:** Make a big c-shape with your hand and place it about two inches behind the darker area around your nipple (areola).
3. **Apply pressure:** Press your fingers back toward your chest.
4. **Compress and roll:** Squeeze your fingers and thumb together gently and roll forward to get milk out.
5. **Repeat motion:** Move your hand around your breast to get more milk.
6. **Collect drops:** Use a small cup or container to catch the drops.

**Scan the QR code to learn more about hand expression:**  
[vimeo.com/291805110](https://vimeo.com/291805110)



## What to Expect

When a parent first tries hand expression, they will likely only see a few drops of milk; this is normal. Even if you do not visualize any drops, prenatal hand expression stimulates the cells that make milk to produce more milk volumes sooner after birth.



## Tips for Hand Expression

- ▶ **Practice:** It might take five to 10 minutes to see any colostrum.
- ▶ **Encourage milk flow:** Massage, warm compresses, or expressing after a warm bath can help.
- ▶ **Get help from your partner:** Parents often say the partner is able to collect more colostrum when they do hand expression.
- ▶ **Schedule a prenatal lactation visit:** Lactation consultants can help you during a prenatal visit. Learning to hand express colostrum at the end of pregnancy is valuable. It is much easier to learn a skill when you're well-rested and have some privacy than when it's an immediate or urgent need just after giving birth.



## Contact Information

Please call us anytime you have questions or are unsure if breastfeeding is going well.

**Overlake Parent and  
Baby Care Center**  
425.688.5389

**Additional Lactation Support**  
Kaiser Permanente Women's Health Care  
at Bellevue Medical Center  
425.502.4230