

Maternity Services – Toowoomba Hospital

Patient information



Increasing breast milk supply when your baby isn't latching well or not latching at all



When you plan to breastfeed and things aren't happening spontaneously, it can be a bit stressful. You know your colostrum and breast milk are perfectly designed for your baby's needs. This guide can assist you towards your goal of successful breastfeeding.

From Birth: If you haven't already been shown, ask your midwife how to hand express. This is best done around 1 hour after baby is born, and 1-3 hours thereafter.

"Move your milk early, move your milk often."

Handy tips

Skin-to-skin cuddling can increase oxytocin (also known as the love hormone) which can assist milk flow. It also **promotes latching and breastfeeding** and helps you respond to baby's **early feeding cues**.

Breastfeeding is the most effective way to remove milk from your breasts. Hand expressing in the early days is the next most effective way. The use of a breast pump on "stimulation" or "initiate" mode before hand expressing sessions can increase the volume you can express. At this time, electric pumping alone is not enough to remove milk well.

Try to express each breast for at least **10 - 15 minutes**. Some women may prefer to switch sides every few minutes - or once the flow slows to drops to give hands and breasts a rest. This can also increase the amount expressed as it mimics the time and stimulation your newborn baby would provide at your breast.



****Avoid sliding fingers and hands and creating friction on your breast. This is counter productive and can cause pain and damage to skin and underlying tissues.**

The amount you express will range between a few drops to a few mls, increasing each day. You can collect it in a small medicine cup or a syringe – or if feeding directly to baby – on a teaspoon.

It is OK to have one longer 5 - 6 hour break within a 24-hour period for a longer sleep, as long as breasts have been expressed **at least 8 times in that 24 hour period**.

***Tip** – expressing at least once overnight can further increase Prolactin (milk making hormone) levels.

You can mimic baby's cluster feeding patterns by expressing more frequently for slightly shorter periods every 1-2 hours for a few hours, for a day (with a 5 hour break overnight), for a couple of days – as you feel able.

Once you are expressing larger volumes or your breasts are becoming heavier, you can use a breast pump more effectively for milk removal. The above suggested times are still appropriate. Using breast compression during pumping can help increase the flow and volume of milk expressed. Hand expressing is still valuable for increased milk removal and breast stimulation at this time – before and/or after pumping.



Double pumping can remove larger volumes of milk and decrease overall pumping time required, however, if you have a single pump, the use of breast compression while pumping and switching sides frequently also helps with producing larger volumes. Hand expressing afterwards can also increase the amount of milk you get. **Remember... "The more you take – the more you make."**

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Contact ddh_design@health.qld.gov.au
for publishing information on this resource.



NSQHS Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers

We worked with our Darling Downs Health consumer group to create this resource for our communities.



**Queensland
Government**

It is common to produce different volumes at different times of the day.

If your supply is significantly less than baby's needs 5-7 days after baby's birth, your midwife, lactation consultant or GP may recommend starting a medication called **Domperidone** which may help increase your breast milk supply. This is available by prescription from your GP. Continue pumping and or manually expressing your breasts as frequently as previously mentioned as this assists medication to be effective in building your milk supply.

For storage of expressed breastmilk refer to *Your guide to the first 12 months* in the baby's red health record book.

Useful videos



Hand Expression of Breast Milk
Stanford University



Maximizing Milk Production with Hands-On Pumping
Stanford University

Contact our team



If you have any concerns or questions, please contact the lactation clinic on 0419 610 363 during office hours, Monday to Friday (public holidays excepted) between 8:30AM and 4PM.

References:

1. Domperidone fact sheet, Children's Health Queensland Hospital www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/medicines-fact-sheet-domperidone-for-improving-breast-milk-supply
2. Early feeding cues, Queensland Government <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/children/pregnancy/antenatal-information/breastfeeding-101/signs-of-hunger>
3. Establishing Breastfeeding Queensland Clinical Guideline, Queensland Health https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/139965/g-bf.pdf
4. Stanford University Expressing Videos
5. Your Guide to the first 12 months booklet, Children's Health <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/PDF/brochures/child-health-information-book.pdf>