

After reading this lesson, click the survey link at the end to answer a few questions and receive nutrition education credit for your class.

Hand Expression



What is hand expressing breast milk?

Hand expressing breast milk is a natural technique that uses the hands to massage and compress the breast to remove breast milk. It's a way for mothers to connect with their bodies and provide the best nourishment for their babies.

Sometimes breastfeeding can be a challenge, especially for first time nursing mothers. However, there is a technique that can empower every mother to take control of their breastfeeding journey.

Hand expression, a method more effective than using a breast pump for many women, can be a game-changer. Whether a mother does not have access to an electric breast pump or simply wants to make more breast milk, the power is in her hands to express breast milk efficiently.



When is hand expression helpful?

- **To help relieve engorgement**, especially in the beginning when mom's breasts may feel overly full or during the weaning process.
- **To increase the volume of breast milk.** Studies have shown that a combination of pumping and hand expressing increases milk supply.
- **To increase the flow of breast milk** while baby is at the breast. This will help baby get more milk.
- **To encourage baby to latch.** Expressing small amounts of colostrum or breast milk onto the nipple just prior to latching may help entice a baby to go to the breast.
- **To express milk when a breast pump is unavailable.**

How to Get Started

Remember that the expression of milk gets easier the more you try it. You may get only a few drops at first, which is okay! The more you hand express, the easier it will become. As you get better at hand expression, the amount of milk you remove should increase. The amount of milk expressed will vary and is not necessarily the same amount baby will get at the breast. Hand expression may take 5 to 10 minutes for some moms, or 20 to 30 minutes for others. Both are normal.

Click [here](#) to watch a short video on how to hand express. Once you are done watching the video, return to this lesson to complete a few questions and receive credit for this class.

Storing Expressed Breast Milk

Counter Top
or Table



Room temp. (77°F or colder)

UP TO 4 HOURS

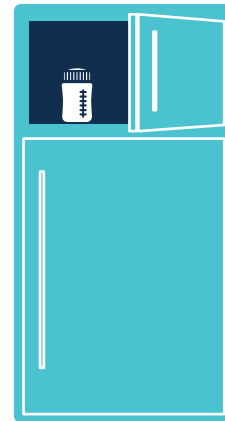
Refrigerator



40°F or colder *

UP TO 4 DAYS

Freezer with
separate door



0°F or colder * *

UP TO 6 MONTHS

Congratulations, you have finished!

Contact your local WIC clinic's breastfeeding expert.

STOP!

[Click here to complete the survey and receive credit](#)



Find us on  

This publication was issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), an equal opportunity employer and provider. A digital file has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in compliance with section 3-114 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes and is available for download at www.documents.ok.gov. | Issued July 2024