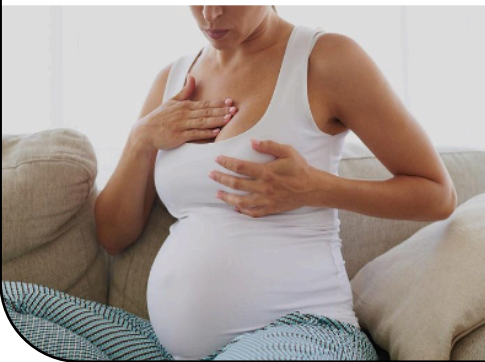


Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting



*A guide for clients booked with
Private Midwives*

What is Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting?

Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting is performed by collecting Colostrum from the breast. Colostrum is the Antibody rich first milk that mothers produce from around 20 weeks' gestation and for the first three days after birth. Colostrum provides immunity and protection to your new baby and acts as a laxative that speeds up the passage of Meconium, reducing the risk of Jaundice.



Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting is collected into a Colostrum Syringe from 36 weeks' gestation and can be stored in a freezer until your baby is born or up to 6 months. The frozen Colostrum can be taken to the hospital and stored until ready to use where it should be defrosted and used within 24 hours.

What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

Infant health: Breastfeeding protects children from a vast range of illnesses, including infection, diabetes, asthma, heart disease and obesity, as well as cot death (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

Maternal health: Breastfeeding also protects mothers from breast and ovarian cancers and heart disease

Relationship-building: Breastfeeding supports the mother-baby relationship and the mental health of both baby and mother

Worldwide benefits: The benefits are seen in both high- and low-income countries, with a study published in The Lancet in 2016 finding that increasing breastfeeding rates around the world to near universal levels could prevent 823,000 annual deaths in children younger than five years and 20,000 annual maternal deaths from breast cancer

What are the Benefits of Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting?

Harvested Colostrum is readily available if your baby requires a top-up. It also reduces the risk of hypoglycaemia and the need for formula top-ups

It empowers mothers-to-be to play an active role in the care of their newborn.

It can have a positive impact on breastfeeding initiation and maintenance

How to harvest Colostrum – Antenatal Expressing of Colostrum



Step 1.

Always wash your hands before you start expressing.

Expressing after a shower or bath can be extremely beneficial to colostrum harvesting. Some mothers also find a warm compress such as a hot flannel or holding a hot water bottle against their breasts aids colostrum harvesting.

Make sure you have your colostrum harvesting equipment ready to hand such as your sterile syringes, sterile spoon or pot.

Step 2. Sit in a comfortable position. You will need time, space, and to be able to relax. Some mothers find it helps to sit in the baby's nursery or look at scan pictures of their baby as this can initiate the hormonal response.

Step 3. Gently massage your breast, starting from the underside of your breast working around the breast towards the nipple. Using kneading, circular and stroking movements to massage. You should be gentle when massaging and you can use one or both hands, making sure it does not cause any discomfort. Some mothers find it works well to massage whilst in the shower, bath or other warm environment.

Step 4. Find the correct place to press using your thumb and index finger creating a C shape (see image) This is usually a few centimetres back from the base of the nipple, or move up slightly until you find where



the breast feels firmer and a change in the texture of the breast tissue is felt.

Keep the 'C shape' position with the thumb and finger

Step 5. Using the pads of your fingers rather than the fingertips, press back into the breast, squeezing gently for a few seconds and then releasing.

Your fingers should **not** touch the nipple, but should work on the outside of the areola without tugging, pinching or dragging your nipple.

Gently squeeze and release, squeeze and release. Repeat this motion to mimic the action of a baby's sucking.



This picture shows beads of colostrum forming on the nipple. It may take many attempts before any colostrum is seen but do not let this put you off as this is completely normal.

Step 6. If any beads of colostrum form they can be collected in 3 different ways depending on how much colostrum is produced.

6a) Beads of colostrum on the nipple:

The easiest way to collect the beads of colostrum from the nipple is to suck it directly from the nipple into a sterile syringe. This can be fairly tricky and you may need a little help in sucking up the colostrum.



Have a sterile syringe ready to use. **DO NOT** pull the plunger out. To use the syringe it must have the plunger pushed fully into the syringe.

Place the tip of the syringe over the bead of colostrum and with your other hand, gently pull up the plunger slightly (but only enough to suck up the bead of colostrum).

If the colostrum is pulled too far down the syringe, flick the syringe to remove any air bubbles and very gently push up the plunger. This will push the colostrum back nearer the top but do this carefully! Many mothers have done this, pressed too hard and lost all the colostrum out the end of the syringe. Continue this and keep adding to the syringe each time a bead forms.

6b) Slightly more flow can be expressed onto a sterile spoon

If you are getting more flow than just beads forming, you may want to try expressing directly onto a sterile spoon which involves catching the droplets with the spoon.

Once you have some on the spoon, you can then use your syringe to suck up the colostrum.

Use the same technique mentioned above to suck up the colostrum and move the colostrum up the syringe to the top.



6c) Heavier flow can be expressed into a sterile pot



If you're lucky enough to get larger volumes of colostrum then you may find it easier to express straight into a sterile container. This involves holding your breast over the container and allowing the colostrum to flow or drop into it.

Once you have finished expressing, the colostrum can

then be sucked straight into a sterile syringe.

Step 7. After expressing in this position for a while, move your hand around to hold the breast in the 'C position' from another angle and repeat the squeeze and release motions again.

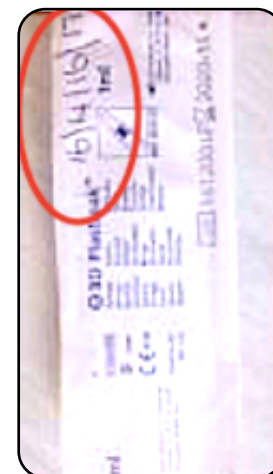
Step 8. Repeat the whole process on the other breast.

Step 9. When you have finished expressing, replace the syringes into their wrappers or place a cap on them.

Step 10. Label your syringes with your name and most importantly the date.

Many mothers have forgotten to do this in the past which has resulted in wasted colostrum.

You can continue adding to the same syringe for 5 days (as long as it is kept refrigerated) but the date you first expressed is the date that should be written on the syringe.



Step 11. Refrigerate or freeze your colostrum. Use a tupperware box or a suitable freezer bag to store your colostrum.

Don't let your hard work and efforts go to waste! Make sure your colostrum is stored correctly until you need it.



Useful Phone numbers and Websites

National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0121

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

www.unicef.org.uk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7P7-Rste98&t=27s>