

## Collection and storage:

- Collect your colostrum into a clean cup or spoon and draw up using a syringe.
- Label syringes with your name, date and time at the end of each session.
- Store syringes in a freezer-safe bag in the freezer.
- When transporting, store syringes in a cooler bag with a freezer pack.
- Bring only enough for a 24 hour period (i.e. a few syringes with amounts between one and 15 mL).
- Any unused colostrum should be discarded if it has been used at a previous feed or is left at room temperature for more than six hours.

Your expressed human milk can be stored accordingly unless otherwise indicated by your care provider:

- Room temperature for six hours
- Fridge for six days
- Freezer for six months



Colostrum Collection Kits can be purchased at [www.SinaiShop.ca](http://www.SinaiShop.ca)

## Frequency:

Hand expression should be done twice daily for five to 10 minutes at a time while alternating between both breasts/chest tissues each session.

## What to expect:

The average amount of colostrum collected is five mL. Even if you do not visualize any drops, AHE stimulates the cells that make milk to produce more milk volumes sooner after birth.

## Safety and considerations:

- Please discuss with your health care provider whether or not AHE is safe for you.
- If you notice any cramping during AHE, stop and discuss with your health care provider whether you should continue.

For more information, please refer to the following web page on our website, [Infant Feeding at Mount Sinai](#).

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# Antenatal Hand Expression

## Women's and Infants' Program

Expressing your milk before your baby arrives.



**Sinai  
Health**

**Mount Sinai Hospital**  
Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Health Complex

## What is antenatal hand expression?

- This technique involves stimulating breast/chest tissues and expressing colostrum by hand in the final weeks of pregnancy, typically after 37 weeks gestation.

## Why is AHE important?

- Hand expression in late pregnancy helps stimulate the body to produce more colostrum and milk.
- Some babies need extra milk in the early days and colostrum is the preferred supplement for your baby.
- These include babies with:
  - Birth parent with diabetes or other complex medical conditions
  - Babies with complex health conditions (e.g. cardiac complications, cleft lip, etc.)
  - Prematurity or low birth weight
  - Multiples (twins, triplets)

## What is colostrum?

- Colostrum is the thick, often gold-coloured fluid that your breasts/chest tissues produce first during your pregnancy.
- Although colostrum is low in volume, it is highly nutritious and easy to digest.

## Benefits for the parent and baby:

### Parent

- Early AHE has proven to increase production and protect your long-term milk supply.
- AHE helps to increase parents' confidence and success in infant feeding and bonding abilities.
- AHE may also serve as a protective factor against postpartum mood issues.
- Hand expression helps to prevent breast/chest tissue engorgement and discomfort in the postpartum period.



### Baby

- Colostrum is packed with protective antibodies, vitamins, and minerals.
- Colostrum helps to build the baby's immune system and gut flora to protect against allergy and disease.

## How to hand express:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Apply warm compresses and gently massage your breasts/chest tissues from the outside towards the nipple.
3. Place your fingers in a C-shape on your breast/chest two finger-widths away from the nipple.
4. Press back towards your chest wall while applying pressure with finger tips to compress breast/chest tissue.
5. Relax hands on breast/chest tissue.
6. Move fingers around the breast/chest tissue to express different areas and then switch to the other side to repeat the steps.

## Technique for Hand Expressing Breast Milk

**Key steps: Press - Compress - Relax**



**Press**  
(back towards your chest)

**Compress**

**Relax**

Watch a video on hand expression on the HealthyFamilies BC website:  
[www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/video-hand-expressing-breastmilk](http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/video-hand-expressing-breastmilk)