

Saint Mary's Hospital  
Newborn Services

Information for Families

# My Breast Milk Expressing Journal

Baby's name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mum's name \_\_\_\_\_

The first 14 days and beyond



- ✓ Step by step guide to expressing your breast milk
- ✓ Practical information
- ✓ Helpful top tips

This journal has been created to help get your expressing off to the best start.

As well as providing some practical tips, this journal will also provide you with a record of how much milk you are producing. Sometimes it's difficult to express frequently, and this journal will help you to see that frequent expressing really does help with your milk supply.

## Why express?

Your baby might have been born early or be unwell. Expressing your breast milk means that your baby can still receive the benefits of your breast milk until they are ready to feed for themselves.

**Breast milk is especially important for premature and poorly babies due to the protection it offers. Try to think of it as a medicine that only you can provide.**

In the early days you may feel so overwhelmed with emotion and exhaustion that it's difficult to take in new information, let alone think about expressing breast milk, but starting to express early (ideally within 2 hours) and frequently can really make a difference.

## How much milk will I get?

In the first few days you would normally expect to get **a few drops** each time you express but remember this is perfectly normal and every drop is extremely important for your baby.



This amount will gradually increase to about a teaspoonful at each expression over the next few days. Then at around day 3 or 4 you may notice that your breasts feel fuller, and your quantity of milk will increase as your milk changes from the thicker, yellow colostrum to paler more mature looking breast milk.

Your breast milk is designed to match your baby's stomach, starting off smaller and increasing as the days pass.

### Size of a newborn's stomach



Day 1



Day 3



1 week



1 month

We encourage you to express frequently because we know that a good milk supply at around 10 days postpartum usually means that you will continue to produce lots of milk (as much as 750mls a day by that stage). This sounds like a lot when you're only getting drops in the early days. It can feel like a lot of pressure to produce large amounts of milk but please remember that **however much milk you produce, your baby will benefit**. Although it may seem very daunting to begin with, all the hard work you do for your baby in the first 10-14 days will pay off in the long run. **You have a 10-14 day window to establish a good supply, and after this you are set for the future.**

## Day 1

Let's get started!

### • How to express your milk by hand

Ask a midwife or neonatal nurse to show you how to hand express. You will probably find it easier to express by hand to begin with as the milk is thicker (colostrum). On the neonatal unit they can also show you how to use the breast pump for extra stimulation.



1. Wash your hands and make sure that you have your colostrum pots ready to use.
2. Try some of our top tips in this booklet to help your milk flow.
3. Place your thumb and index finger on either side of your nipple in a C shape.
4. Walk your thumb down until you feel a change in texture.
5. If you can't feel a change, position your thumb and index finger roughly 2cm back from the nipple.
6. Gently compress, release, repeat again and again. This shouldn't hurt. Avoid sliding your fingers. You should start to see a tiny bead of colostrum.
7. Imagine working round a clock face and when the flow slows down or stops, move around. Once you have gone around the whole breast, start to express the other breast.
8. If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away. You can also try gentle breast massage.
9. Remember, it can take up to a minute for any milk to appear so be patient.

- Remember every drop counts

It's important to hand express some colostrum **as soon as possible after your baby is born, ideally within 2 hours** after giving birth, followed straight away by the breast pump (if possible). You may not see much milk, but you will be stimulating the milk supply. Every drop will be beneficial to your baby. If you are at all unsure ask your neonatal nurse or midwife to come and sit with you for a few minutes while you express to check your technique.

Expression	Time	Volume
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2		
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4		
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7		
8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
9		
10		
11		
12		



### Did you know?

Your first milk is known as colostrum and is highly concentrated with protective factors for your baby.

## ♥ Checklist

Starting expressing is quite simple and you should start as soon as possible following your baby's birth, ideally within 2 hours. Read through the checklist below to make sure you have all the information you need to get started.

### ♥ I have been shown how to hand express and use the breast pump including:

- **Gentle** massage of your breasts before expressing - this can help your milk flow!
- 8 - 10 times in 24 hours and at least once a night between the hours of 2-4am as this is when your milk producing hormone is at its highest.
- Not to go longer than 5 hours between expressing

### ♥ I have received my expressing pack and set, which includes:

- Colostrum bottles and labels to safely collect every drop
- A pair of bonding squares - keep one with you and one with the baby, swap them over and be comforted by the scent
- Breast pump set to stimulate your supply

### ♥ A midwife/nurse/doctor has discussed the benefits of my breast milk for my baby which are:

- Protects against infection & promotes healing
- Easier to digest than formula
- Matures the immature sensitive gut

### ♥ I have been shown how to provide mouth care using drops of my colostrum and how it can help my baby with:

- Pain relief
- Protection from infection (antibodies and nutrients are absorbed in their mouth)
- Provide a positive sensation when there can be too many negative sensations.

I have been given a space in the fridge/freezer to store my milk. My baby's milk kitchen number is \_\_\_\_\_



## Day 2

- A few more drops**

We have a breast pump in each room on the neonatal unit so you can express next to your baby. We also have private expressing rooms to help you relax! If you are not expressing at your baby's cot side, try to look at photos of your baby whilst expressing. This can help your milk flow.

Hand express for a couple of minutes before turning on the pump to help your milk flow.

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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### Did you know?

Even if your baby can't feed, you can still give the benefits of your colostrum to your baby with mouth care. Ask your neonatal nurse about this.



## How to use the electric breast pump

1. Wash your hands and make sure that your expressing set has been sterilised and is ready to use.
2. Try some of our **top tips** in this booklet to **help your milk to flow** before you go on the pump.
3. Place the funnel over your nipple – ensuring that your nipple fits easily into the inner funnel, it's central and that there is a good seal all the way round.
4. When you express breastmilk, we recommend that you express both breasts at the same time – it saves time, will help to increase your milk supply, and increases the fat content of your milk!
5. All mums should start on the Initiate setting – it mimics how a newborn baby sucks and will help stimulate your milk supply. Use this setting until you are pumping 20mls (total from both breasts) for at least 3 expressions, or alternatively on day 5 move on to the Maintain setting. Ask your nurse to show you how to start these.



Power On

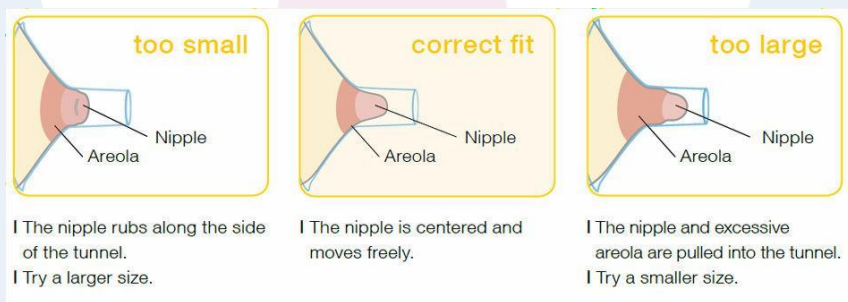


Initiate



Vacuum

6. Watch how your breast fits in the pump when pumping. If the pump is painful ask a nurse to check.
7. Try not to remove the funnel whilst still pumping as the suction is still strong. If it needs removing, switch the breast pump off first or break the seal with your finger.



## Steam sterilising your expressing kit

In our milk kitchens you can clean and sterilise your pump sets. It is important to sterilise your set each time you express.

- ✓ After you've finished expressing, separate the kit, wash in hot soapy water and rinse well.
- ✓ Store in your clean tupperware box or bag.
- ✓ When you are ready to express, you need to sterilize your pump set using the Ardo microwave bag provided (See instructions below).
- ✓ These are the parts that need to be sterilised as they come into contact with milk.



- ✓ Once you have finished expressing, clean the pump with the wipes provided so another mother can use it.

To use an Ardo Easy Clean Microwave Steriliser Bag, you should follow these steps:

1. Put the equipment you want to sterilize in the bag.
2. Add 60 ml (2 ounces) of water to the bag.
3. Place the bag in the center of the microwave.
4. Microwave for the correct time, depending on the power level:
5. 1.5 minutes at 1100 W (NICU Microwaves are 1110W, set the microwave to 90 seconds).
6. 3 minutes at 800–1100 W
7. 5 minutes at 600–750 W
8. Open the microwave and let the bag cool for at least 2 minutes.
9. Using the **safety handle**, remove the bag from the microwave.
10. Keep the bag away from your body and carefully pour out the remaining water through the steam valve.
11. Open the bag and remove the clean parts.
12. Let the parts cool before touching them.





## Day 2 checklist

**You will be getting to know your little one by now and you are likely to have been given plenty of information over the last few days to process. Use the checklist below to help you along your way.**

♥ I have been shown massage techniques; this can help your milk flow!

- 8-10 times in 24 hours including at least once at night
- Aim not to go longer than 5 hours between expressions

♥ I have received:

- x 2 expressing sets for double pumping and optimal milk supply
- Bottles
- Tamper proof labels to fix over the lid of your bottles
- Red colostrum labels (use up until day 5)
- White mature milk labels (use once milk has come in)
- Tupperware box to store expressing set
- Ardo easy clean microwave sterilizer bag

♥ I have brought in:

- Bag to carry bottles
- Pen
- Cold drink to keep hydrated (cold water fountains are available in the expressing room)
- Book to read to baby at cot side when not expressing (if you wish)



## Day 3

### A bit more, about a teaspoon full

Around this time, you may be seeing that your milk volume is starting to increase, and your breasts feel fuller and firmer. This is often referred to as your milk 'coming in'.

Expression	Time	Volume
1		
2		
3		
4		
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7		
8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
9		
10		
11		
12		

### Did you know??

We have lots of information on feeding for parents on our website:

<https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/newborn-intensive-care-unit-nicu/>

## Kangaroo Care (skin to skin contact)

Kangaroo Care is when your baby is placed skin to skin against your chest. It's a wonderful way for you to bond with your baby and help relax you both. If your baby is too poorly or preterm for Kangaroo Care at this moment, your neonatal Nurse will show you comfort holding that you can do until your baby is ready.

### Benefits for baby

- ♥ Helps to stabilise their heart rate, breathing, oxygen levels and temperature
- ♥ Helps their neurological (brain) development
- ♥ Helps them sleep more restfully, which in turn helps them grow. Growth hormones are highest when a baby is sleeping!
- ♥ Comforts them and makes them feel safe through your voice, smell and heartbeat

### Benefits for you

- ♥ Helps you relax and de-stress, releasing huge bursts of oxytocin (love hormone) which boosts your milk supply
- ♥ Helps increase your milk making hormones Prolactin & Oxytocin
- ♥ Helps you get to know your baby and your baby to know you.

### Check it out!



For more information on Kangaroo Care and Comfort Holding visit [www.Bliss.org.uk](http://www.Bliss.org.uk)



Use the Kangaroo Care Chart in this booklet, where you can record your family memories of Kangaroo Care!

## Day 3 checklist

You will be getting to know your little one and you are likely to have been given lots of information over the last few days for you to digest. Use the checklist below to help you along your way.



I have talked to my neonatal nurse/doctor about when Kangaroo Care may be right for my baby. You can have kangaroo care every day, the longer the better but we would advise a minimum of 1 hour so that baby can settle into a nice rest period on your chest.

☐

## Top tips to help your milk flow

### Touch

Have as much skin contact with your baby as possible. This will help to remind your body to make milk, as well as helping you to bond with your baby/s and relax, which really helps your milk to flow! On the Neonatal Unit we encourage 'Kangaroo Care' so ask your neonatal nurse about this.

Massaging your breast before expressing mimics how your baby would touch you if they were getting ready to breastfeed. It can help speed up the flow of milk.



### Sight and Sound

Expressing next to your baby's incubator / cot where you can see and hear your baby using our woodland and under the sea themed screens for privacy. Watching videos and photos of your baby when you are at home.



## Smell

You can use the bonding squares in your expressing pack to pick up the scent of your baby and keep it close with you. These can be changed for small items such as a baby's hat or knitted items that are personal to you if you wish. Using your baby's blanket that you have used during Kangaroo Care or cuddles can be especially comforting whilst you express.



## Relaxing

A nice warm bath, shower or back massage will help, even just stimulating your breasts or nipples before expressing often helps. Turn the television or radio on in the expressing room and relax to your favourite programme or song.



## Be kind to yourself

Make sure you are eating, drinking and getting sleep. Instead of setting an alarm to express at night, you could try drinking a pint of water before you go to sleep; chances are you'll need to get up for a wee! Some mums like to record their baby's sound as their alarm, as they are waking up to a more natural sound.

Milk flow can fluctuate from day to day. If you notice the amount of milk you're making reduces, have sore nipples, or are worried at any stage let your neonatal nurse know.

Keep reminding yourself what an important part you're playing in your baby's health and brain development.



## Day 4 and 5

Well done for expressing so far! You may find getting into a routine with your expressing may help you manage your time and give you flexibility.

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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11		
12		



Don't forget to express at least once during the night as your hormone for making milk is higher helping you produce more!

## Day 4 and 5 checklist



I have had a review to support expressing with my neonatal nurse including:

- Method of expressing
- Frequency and duration
- Techniques to help your milk flow



I have had a review to support feeding my baby with my neonatal nurse, if appropriate including:

- Positioning and attachment:
  - Using CHIN (Close, Head free, In line, Nose to nipple) if breastfeeding
  - Using IDFS (Infant Driven Feeding Scale) if bottle feeding
  - Using Parental Tube Feeding Support package if tube feeding
  - Paced, responsive bottle feeding if offering bottles

## Day 6

Your baby may already be feeding by breast or bottle. If your baby is too poorly or preterm to feed at this moment there's still lots you can do to support your baby until they are ready, just ask your neonatal nurse!

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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## Need further support?

Ask your neonatal nurse to go through the 'Back to Basics' form with you.

## Day 7

Amazing! You've been expressing a whole week! If your milk supply is not increasing there are plenty of ways we can help, check out our top tips page and speak to your neonatal nurse.

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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## Do you require a breast pump at home?

You can loan an electric breast pump from us for 4 weeks for a £20 deposit. This will help you to establish a regular milk supply and give you time to find a breast pump that is right for you.

## Day 8 and 9

Your breast milk is tailor made for your baby and changes from feed to feed, adapting to the needs of your baby as they grow.

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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Expression	Time	Volume
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6		
7		
8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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You can watch short videos on expressing milk, feeding and much more!

[www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/small-wonders](http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/small-wonders)





## Day 8 and 9 checklist

♥ I have had a review to support expressing with my neonatal nurse including:

- Method of expressing
- Frequency and duration
- Techniques to help your milk flow

♥ I have had a review to support feeding my baby with my neonatal nurse, if appropriate including:

- Positioning and attachment:
  - Using CHIN (Close, Head free, In line, Nose to nipple) if breastfeeding
  - Using IDFS (Infant Driven Feeding Scale) if bottle feeding
  - Using Parental Tube Feeding Support package if tube feeding
  - Paced responsive bottle feeding if offering bottles

### Neonatal mum's top tip!

Relax as much as you can when you express – watch tv, listen to the radio, read a book, watch videos of your little one. The less you focus on the milk coming out the more it comes!



## Day 10 and 11

Some mums find it very easy to express milk and they produce more than their baby requires, others need more time and may produce just enough to feed their babies. It can be very time-consuming to express but it does not mean that you will find breastfeeding equally difficult. After all, nature has equipped babies with a very efficient system of getting milk from the breast!

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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11		
12		

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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12		

## Did you know??

Being close to your baby whilst you express can help you relax and increase your milk supply.

## Day 12 and 13

Well done, you are doing great!

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
9		
10		
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12		

Expression	Time	Volume
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4		
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7		
8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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### Neonatal mum's top tip!

Mums have found skin to skin useful in practicing holding their baby in preparation for breast feeding.



## Day 14

Two whole weeks... well done! All your hard work has helped set your body up to make breast milk for your baby long term. Don't worry if you're not making as much milk as you thought you would, have a chat with your neonatal nurse to see how we can help.

Expression	Time	Volume
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8 (aim for <u>at least</u> this many times)		
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## Need further support?

Ask your neonatal nurse to go through the 'Back to Basics' form with you (add the page)

## Day 14 checklist

♥ I have had a review to support expressing with my NICU nurse including:

- Method of expressing
- Frequency and duration
- Techniques to help your milk flow

♥ I have had a review to support feeding my baby with my neonatal nurse, if appropriate including:

- Positioning and attachment:
  - Using CHINS (Close, Head free, In line, Nose to nipple, Sustainable position) if breastfeeding
  - Using IDFS (Infant Driven Feeding Scale) if bottle feeding
  - Using Parental Tube Feeding Support package if tube feeding


## Need further support?

Your local community will have lots of education workshops & infant feeding drop-in sessions that you can look up online and attend e.g. Manchester Infant feeding team

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/infantfeedingteam](https://www.facebook.com/infantfeedingteam)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/ift\\_mlco](https://www.instagram.com/ift_mlco)

<https://padlet.com/manchesterinfantfeedingteam/manchester-infant-feeding-team-emg2zxdhjnpe3z16>

This Padlet  contains tons of amazing resources for new parents!

Other useful websites include:

<https://www.bliss.org.uk>

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly>

<https://laleche.org.uk>

<https://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk>

<https://www.hifn.org>



## Week 3

Use these tables to log your expressions over the next few weeks! It can help you keep track of your expressing and highlight if you need further support.

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

## Week 4: Expressing log

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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## Week 5: Expressing log

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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## Week 6: Expressing log

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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## Week 7: Expressing log

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													



## Week 8

If you are expressing plenty more milk than your baby needs, have a chat with your neonatal nurse – it may be that you can reduce the number of expressions now and the staff will advise you how to do this.

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
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Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Time													
Volume													

Kangaroo Care Chart

Here you can record all your family’s precious moments of skin to skin using the Kangaroo Care Stickers. Ask your neonatal nurse for a pack.


## Back to Basics Pathway

### Increasing your milk supply

Use this checklist with your nurse if you feel your EBM supply is reducing or your baby needs more milk than you are producing.

Affix baby's  
sticker here

Date		Notes	Action Plan
	<b>Current Practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is your routine for expressing method / frequency / time? Use this journal to help record this.</li> <li>Effective hand expressing demonstrated (can use knitted boob) or correct set up of pump.</li> <li>Use of initiate / maintain setting.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Check equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need second expressing kit?</li> <li>Do the shields fit correctly? Other sizes available from the Infant Feeding Team.</li> <li>Double pumping recommended.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Suggestions to stimulate milk production:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breast massage, nipple rolling prior to pumping.</li> <li>Few minutes hand expressing before and after pump.</li> <li>Use of initiate setting (1-2 times a day).</li> <li>Kangaroo Care.</li> <li>Cluster express.</li> <li>Increase expressions 10-12 times a day for a couple of days.</li> <li>Rest and relaxation.</li> <li>Use bonding squares, blankets, photos of baby when not with them.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Review health:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eating, drinking and sleeping.</li> <li>Current medications.</li> <li>Thyroid or hormone investigations.</li> <li>Psychological support is available to all families to cope with the impact of having a baby on the neonatal unit</li> </ul>		
	<b>Review in 48-72 hours:</b> If you require further support from your neonatal nurse, please ask them to contact the feeding team.		