

Expressing Milk for Preterm or Unwell Babies

Tips for starting and building your milk supply



How often should I express?

Start expressing soon after birth. Expressing 8 times a day, roughly every 2–3 hours, day and night, helps make the most milk.



How long should I express?

Aim for 15–20 minutes when expressing both breasts together OR 30 minutes if expressing one breast then the other breast. You will need to hire or buy a breast pump to help.





How much milk will I get?

- Only a few drops in the first few days, then it starts to build up if you keep expressing often.
- Every drop counts!

Single or double?

Express from one or both breasts at a time — but try to express both each session.



Does volume change over time?

Milk volume grows with regular expressing — from drops to full feeds.

What if I have problems?

Speak to your midwife, nurse or lactation consultant

Background artwork: Elizabeth Close Arts