

Whangaia i tō tamaiti kokoti tau

Feeding your NICU baby – getting your breastmilk supply off to the best start

COVERING THE BASICS – CANTERBURY MATERNITY SERVICES

Nau mai, haere mai. We welcome you to our postnatal service and look forward to sharing your early days of parenthood as you grow your whānau. We understand that having a pēpi in NICU can be very challenging and we are here to support you.

We invite you and your support people to read this 'Covering the basics' breastfeeding information when you are ready.

Together our maternity staff, and your LMC will provide your care and in discussion with you create a feeding plan based on your current, individual needs.

We want to help you meet your breastfeeding/chestfeeding goals so please ask for the help you need. - The Breastfeeding Information Board in your postnatal room provide you with information and resources to support your breastfeeding journey. Please also refer to the Whangai Ū | Breastfeeding information and support leaflet in your Well Child/Tamariki Ora book.

We hope you enjoy your stay with us.



Please use the call bell to ask for the support you need. The midwives and nurses providing your care want you to ask them for support with establishing your breastmilk supply.



Staff will give you a NICU 'Colostrum Collection Pack' to use. This will help you keep track of your expressing.



8+

Aim to express by hand and/or pump at least 8 times every day, including at least once overnight with no longer than 5 hours between any two expressing sessions.



Have your baby in skin to skin contact as much as possible. Talk to NICU staff about this.

AT LEAST once per shift, a staff member will review your expressing equipment, technique, and frequency to make sure your breastmilk supply is getting off to the best possible start.

If you have questions or concerns about getting your breastmilk supply off to the best start, please ask for support using the staff call bell.

Discuss the readiness of your pēpi to start breastfeeding with NICU staff.

Referral to a Lactation Consultant will be considered based on individual and clinical need.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

Your midwife or nurse will show you how to express by hand and with an electric breast pump. They will ensure you are provided with, and explain the use of, the NICU 'Colostrum Collection Pack'. They will also advise how to store your expressed breastmilk.

For babies who have been admitted to NICU from birth, begin expressing as soon as possible, preferably within 1-2 hours after birth. This includes using the Symphony (yellow) electric breast pump on the initiate programme and hand expressing.

Always hand express after using the electric breast pump

Express frequently. Aim for at least 8 times over 24 hours and more if possible – INCLUDING at least once overnight with no longer than 5 hours between any two expressing sessions.

Ask the staff in NICU about skin-to-skin contact with your pēpi.

WHY WE RECOMMEND

Frequent expressing helps to stimulate the hormones in your body that make your breastmilk and is essential for getting your milk supply off to the best start

Early expressing improves breastmilk production.

Using the initiate cycle on the electric breast pump has been shown to improve breastmilk supply for premature babies long term. The pump is important for stimulating milk making hormones and initiating breastmilk supply. It is normal not to get any breastmilk by the pump when first expressing.

In the early days of expressing, you will often find you get more colostrum (early breastmilk) by hand expressing than by the pump.

Regular and frequent expressing stimulates and protects your breastmilk supply ready for when pēpi breastfeeds.

You can expect to feel breast changes 'milk coming in' at around 48-72 hours – sometimes earlier if you have breastfed before, and sometimes later if you have had a caesarean or have identified breastfeeding challenges.

*Skin-to-skin contact supports your body's responses for breastfeeding, instinctive breastfeeding behaviours in your pēpi, and so much more!
This will be encouraged and facilitated when your pēpi is ready.*

Before you discharge from our care, have staff:

- Shown you how to use the different models of breast pumps available in the hospital?
- Shown you how to hand express your breastmilk, discussed expressed breastmilk storage, and how to defrost expressed milk?
- Discussed where to access breastfeeding support in your community?
- Shown you how to access the Māmā Aroha App