

Whangaia i tō tamaiti kokoti tau – Feeding your NICU baby and getting your breastmilk supply off to the best start

Covering the basics – Canterbury Maternity Services

Nau mai, haere mai. Welcome to our postnatal service.

We understand that having a pēpi in NICU can feel very challenging and we are here to support you.

We hope you and the people helping you will read this guide called “Covering the Basics” to learn some important things for these early days.

Our staff will take care of you and help make a plan that gets your breastmilk supply off to the best start.

We want to support you with your breastfeeding/chestfeeding goals, so please ask us if you need help.

We hope you have a good stay with us.



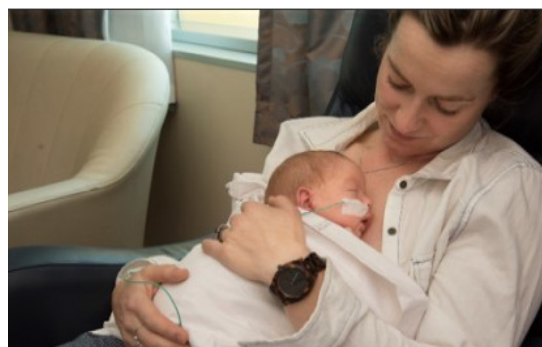
Please use your call bell to ask for help from our staff.



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



Try to express frequently. Aim for 6-8 times over 24 hours, **including** at least once overnight with no longer than 5 hours between any two expressing sessions.



Hold your pēpi in skin to skin contact as much as possible. Talk to NICU staff about this.

At least once each shift, a staff member will check how expressing is going.

If you have any questions or worries about getting your breastmilk supply off to the best start, please press the call bell to ask for help.









Talk with the staff in NICU about when your pēpi is ready to start breastfeeding.

If needed, we might ask a lactation consultant to help you.

What we recommend	Why we recommend
Staff will show you how to express milk by hand and with an electric breast pump. They will give you the NICU 'Colostrum Collection Pack' and explain how to use it. They will also tell you how to store your expressed breastmilk.	Expressing often helps your body make the hormones needed to produce breastmilk and is very important for getting your milk supply off to the best start.
For babies who go to the NICU right after birth, start expressing milk as soon as you can, ideally within 1-2 hours after birth. This means using the Symphony (yellow) electric breast pump on the "initiate" setting, along with hand expressing.	Early Expressing improves breastmilk production. The initiate program helps increase milk supply for premature babies. It helps your body make the hormones needed for milk and gets milk production started. It's normal if you don't get any milk at first when using the electric pump—right now, the most important thing is the stimulation.
Hand express after using the electric breast pump until your milk comes in.	In the early days, you will often find you get more colostrum (early breastmilk) by hand expressing than by the pump.
It's best to express at least 8 times every 24 hours, including once during the night, ideally between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. Also, try to make sure that no more than 5 hours pass between any two expressing sessions. In the early days, it might be hard to get 8 pumping sessions in 24 hours. This is normal. Talk to staff to see how they can help you reach as many sessions as possible	Expressing milk regularly and often helps get your milk supply ready for when your pēpi is able to breastfeed/chestfeed. Each māmā/parent may notice their milk coming in at different times. Usually, you will begin to notice changes in your breasts/chest, or feel your 'milk coming in,' when your pēpi is around 3-4 days old. If you have fed a pēpi before it may happen sooner. If you have had a C-section or have other challenges, it could take a bit longer.
You will be shown how to switch from the 'initiate program' to the 'maintain program' on the yellow breast pump after collecting 20mL from both breasts in one expressing session, or when you notice significant breast or chest changes, such as fullness or firmness.	The 'maintain program' is clinically proven to optimize milk removal once your milk has come in.
Ask the staff in NICU about skin-to-skin contact with your pēpi.	Skin to skin helps your body get ready for breastfeeding/chestfeeding and supports the natural breastfeeding behaviours of pēpi. It has many other benefits too. NICU staff will encourage and help you with this when your pēpi is ready.

Before you discharge from our care, have the staff:

- Shown you how to hand express and explained how to safely store, defrost and use the milk?
- Talked to you about where you can get help with feeding your pēpi after discharge.

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