

■ Evelyn & Rose Women's Health

Antenatal Expressing of Colostrum

■ What Is Antenatal Expressing?

Antenatal expressing means gently collecting small amounts of **colostrum** (your first breast milk) during the last few weeks of pregnancy, usually from **36–37 weeks onward**. Colostrum is thick, golden, and rich in antibodies and nutrients — it's your baby's first natural immunity boost.

■ Why Express Before Birth?

Expressing colostrum can be helpful if:

- You have **diabetes** or **gestational diabetes**
- You expect a **planned caesarean** or **induction**
- You have **PCOS**, **thyroid conditions**, or **breast surgery**
- Your baby may need **special care** or **extra feeding support** after birth

Even if you have a straightforward pregnancy, having stored colostrum can be reassuring and useful.

■ Benefits of Antenatal Expressing

- Provides your baby with **early nutrition and antibodies**
- Helps with **blood sugar regulation** in newborns
- Encourages **milk supply** to establish early
- Reduces stress if baby needs extra feeds
- Promotes **confidence and breastfeeding readiness**

■ When & How to Start

Most women can begin safely at **36 weeks gestation** — check with your obstetrician or midwife first.

1. Wash your hands and ensure you're comfortable.
2. Use **gentle hand expression** — massage and compress the breast toward the nipple.
3. Collect drops of colostrum into a **sterile syringe or container**.
4. Label with **name, date, and time**, then freeze or refrigerate as advised.

Tip: It's normal to only collect a few drops at a time. Every drop counts!

■ Safety & Precautions

- Stop immediately if you feel contractions or tightenings.
- Avoid expressing if you have **placenta previa** or **risk of preterm labour** — unless cleared by your doctor.
- Always use **clean, sterile containers** and transport frozen milk in an insulated bag.

■ Storing & Using Colostrum

- Store in **1–3 mL syringes** or **small sterile containers**.
- **Refrigerate** for up to 48 hours or **freeze** for up to 3 months.
- Bring it to hospital on admission — staff can thaw and use it if your baby needs it.

■ Key Takeaway

Antenatal expressing can help you feel prepared, confident, and connected to your baby before birth. With the right guidance and support, this small act can make a meaningful difference in your breastfeeding journey.

■ Evelyn & Rose Women's Health

■■■■■ Compassionate, personalised care through every stage of pregnancy and beyond.

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