

Information for patients

Introduction

Giving your baby just breast milk and nothing else to eat or drink for around the first 6 months has many health benefits: Babies who are breastfed may be less likely to develop childhood diabetes. It is thought that cow's milk (the main ingredient of formula milk) may cause a possible trigger for diabetes in some babies; this may probably be more likely for your baby if you or your partner have diabetes.

Therefore, it is very important that mothers who are diabetic avoid giving their baby formula milk if at all possible until the baby is at least 6 months old. If you have diabetes and are insulin dependent you may find that you need less insulin when you are breastfeeding and that you need to eat more. If you have gestational diabetes you are less likely to go on to develop diabetes in later life if you breastfeed your baby.

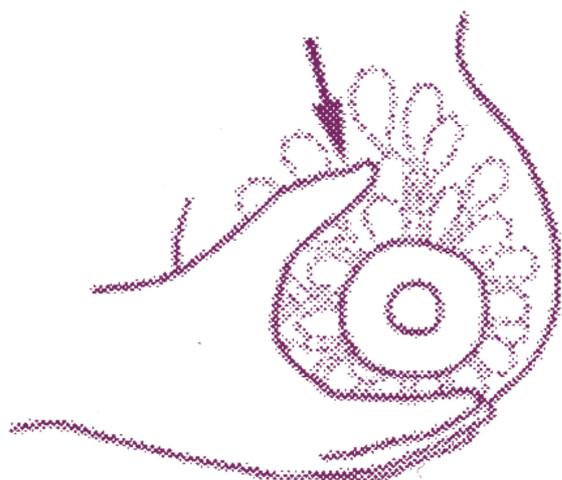
Benefits of expressing your milk antenatally

If you are a mother with diabetes, in the first few hours of life your baby may have a short time when their blood sugar is low and they will need a little extra milk. You will be encouraged to give your baby frequent feeds to help prevent this. It would be helpful if you have already expressed some of your breast milk so that, if your baby does need extra milk, this can be given to them instead of formula milk if there is a sufficient amount of expressed milk. The ideal time to do this is before your baby is born after 37 weeks gestation.

It can also be helpful for other mothers to express if they have high blood pressure, taking beta blockers, expecting a small for gestational age baby, large baby, twins or Triplets. Also useful for those babies with fetal anomaly who may deliver early?

How to express milk during pregnancy

- Gentle breast massage (no dragging of skin)
- Gentle nipple rolling. Finding the right spot



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- Make a 'C' shape with thumb and fingers approximately 2-3 cm from the base of the nipple
- Squeeze gently and release taking care not to drag the skin
- Get a rhythm going
- Small drops then appear which can be collected in an oral syringe
- As flow subsides:
 - Rotate around the breast
 - Move to other breast

You can express approximately 3-4 times a day and you may only get a small amount (less than 1ml), but don't worry.

If you need any antenatal support with expressing you can contact the infant feeding lead midwife.

Storage Advice

Remember to use a sterilised container to put the milk in.

You can store mum's milk in the fridge for up to 5 days at 4°C or lower (usually at the back, never in the door).

Mum's milk can be stored for 2 weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to 6 months in a freezer.

Defrost frozen mum's milk in the fridge. Once thawed, use it straight away.

If your baby prefers, you can warm the milk up to body temperature before feeding. Never heat milk in the microwave as it can cause hot spots which can burn your baby's mouth.

Risks

You may find that when you express you feel your womb going hard and relaxing – these are 'Braxton Hicks' contractions. Don't worry about these, unless they begin to feel like period-type cramps or mild labour contractions. This is rare, but if it happens you should stop expressing and rest. If they don't stop and you think you might be in early labour, you should telephone the ward / team for advice.

Reference Section

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, CG63 'Diabetes in pregnancy: management of diabetes', March 2008.

Breastfeeding Review, 'Expressing and storing colostrum antenatally for use in the newborn period', November 2006

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Contact Details for Further Information

Infant Feeding Lead for Grimsby

Tel: 07850299641

or

Infant Feeding Lead for Scunthorpe

Tel: 07595087303

Any Comments, Compliments, Concerns or Complaints

If you have any other concerns please talk to your nurse, therapist or doctor. Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are available on 03033 306518 (Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Goole). You can also contact nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

As a Trust we value equality of access to our information and services, therefore alternative formats available on request at nlg-tr.interpreters@nhs.net

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