

## Breastmilk expression guide for mother of babies born with cleft (palate involvement)

- **Skin-to-skin contact** with your baby: this helps stimulate your milk supply and helps your baby develop their feeding and sucking skills.
- **Supplement feeding** times at the breast with expressed breastmilk from a specialized assisted feeding bottle (as advised by your nurse/cleft team). A feeding episode (breast, and bottle if needed) should be no longer than 40 minutes as your baby will tire after this length of time.
- **Frequency of breastmilk expression:** at least 8 times in 24 hours in the early weeks until your milk supply is established, including once at night time between midnight and 6am.
- **Timing of expressions:** work around your lifestyle with no gaps of more than 4 hours (daytime) and 6 hours (night time) if you are exclusively pumping.
- **Stimulating milk ejection:** use breast massage, relaxation, skin-to-skin contact and/or being close to your baby (photos or items of your baby's clothing if you are separated from them). This helps to stimulate oxytocin and let-down of your milk.
- **Milk volumes:** a gradual increase in your 24 hours volumes should be seen (keeping a written record/log may help). Aim is to have 700mls-900mls in 24 hours for your baby by 2 weeks of age.
- **Breast condition:** should feel soft after expressing and no red areas identified.
- **Using a breast pump:** There are a range of pumps available. If you are exclusively pumping you need to choose a hospital grade pump and double pump. Your midwife/lactation consultant will advise on this. Pumps may be hired, or may be provided by your public health nurse (PHN) in some areas. Please contact your local Cuidiu or PHN for further information on availability.
- **Effective pumping technique:** education on cleaning and assembly of breast pump (& storage of milk). Hands on pumping technique and breast massage/breast compression methods to increase flow. Ensure comfort with suction settings and there should be no nipple soreness. Express until flow slows down then hand massage and express again.

Adapted from the *Expressing Assessment tool* – CHI Crumlin 2016,

References: UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative 2013, HSE Guidelines for mothers available at

<https://www2.hse.ie/babies-and-toddlers/breastfeeding/>

Resources:

- HSE breastfeeding booklet available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/child-health-and-wellbeing/breastfeeding-healthy-childhood-programme/breastfeeding-factsheets/breastfeeding-good-start.pdf>
- Hand expression video available at <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html>
- Maximizing your milk volumes: video available on <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html>
- Breast compressions: information available at <https://realbabymilk.org/breast-compression/>
- Feeding your baby with a cleft: [www.intermountainhealthcare.org/ckr-ext/Dcmnt?ncid=522574921](http://www.intermountainhealthcare.org/ckr-ext/Dcmnt?ncid=522574921)

