

# How often to express milk?

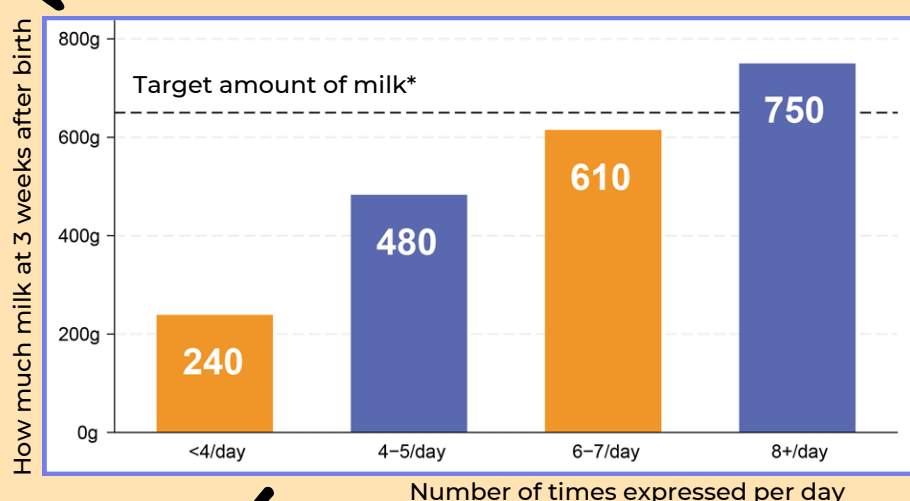
This information is for women (and parents) whose baby is **sick or born very early**

## What is expressing?

When babies are born sick or early, their mother's (or parent's) own milk is like a medicine for them

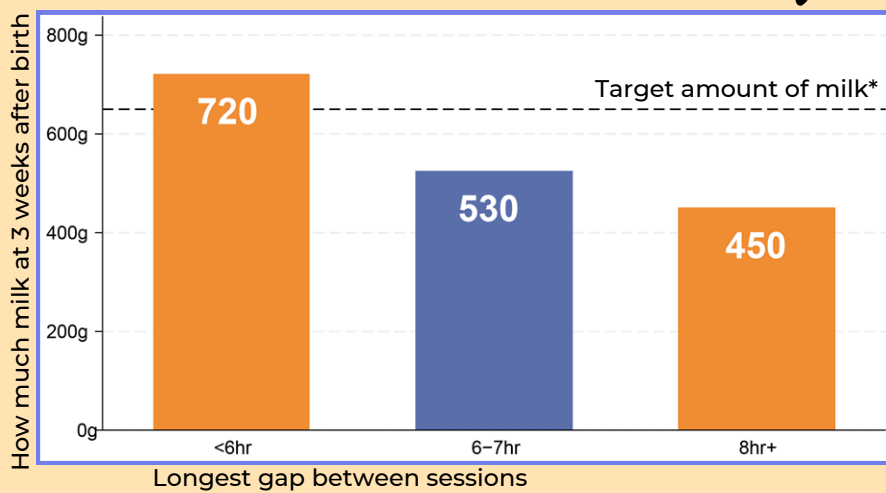
If your baby can't breastfeed directly, you will need to get the milk out yourself, using your hands or a pump.

This is called "expressing"



## Expressing more often is linked to getting more milk

In a research study, we saw this at four days and at three weeks after birth



## Longer gaps between expressing sessions are linked to getting less milk

In the research study, we saw this at four days and at three weeks after birth

## Expressing at night is needed so there isn't a long gap between sessions

## The exact timing was not linked to the amount of milk

In the research study, this was true at four days and three weeks after birth

## Is everyone the same?

There are **very big** differences between people

Some people get a small amount of milk even when they express very often

If you have breastfed a baby before (for example for six months or more), you might be able to express less often

- Try to express eight times a day or more
- Try not to leave any gaps of more than six hours between sessions, including at night
- Few people who express less than six times a day can express a 'target' amount of milk\*

\*The target amount of milk (650ml by three weeks after birth) is linked to a high chance of later exclusive breastmilk feeding

Some people find it hard to express milk however hard they try, and others find it easier. Giving breastmilk is one of many things parents can do for sick babies, like having skin to skin cuddles, talking to them and getting involved in their day to day care

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For more information about babies born early or sick, see [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)



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