

How soon after birth to express colostrum?

This information is for women (and parents) whose baby is **sick or born very early**, so the baby can't breastfeed immediately after birth



What is colostrum?

Colostrum is the first milk your body makes after birth. It comes in small amounts but it is full of things that protect your baby against infections

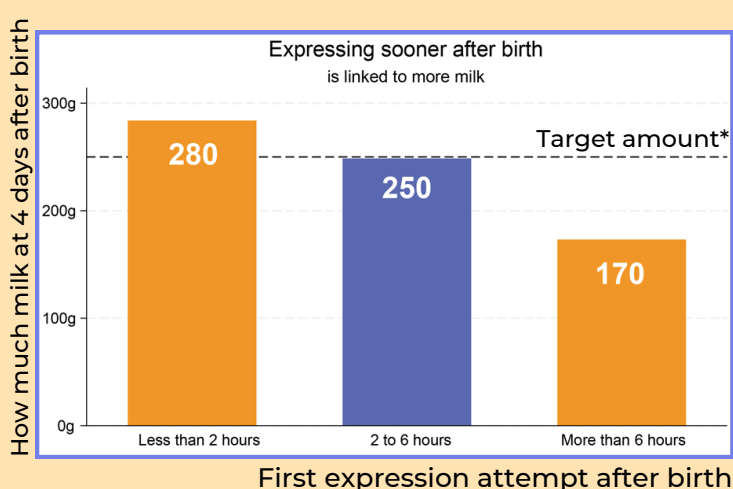
When babies are born sick or early, colostrum is like a medicine for them.

After a few days your milk will 'come in' so there is more of it

Does it matter when you first try to express colostrum?

The earlier you express after giving birth, the sooner your baby can have your colostrum

In a research study, expressing sooner after birth was also linked to being able to express more milk in the days after birth

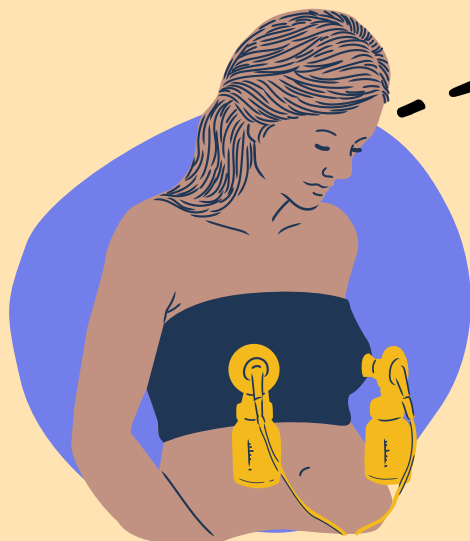
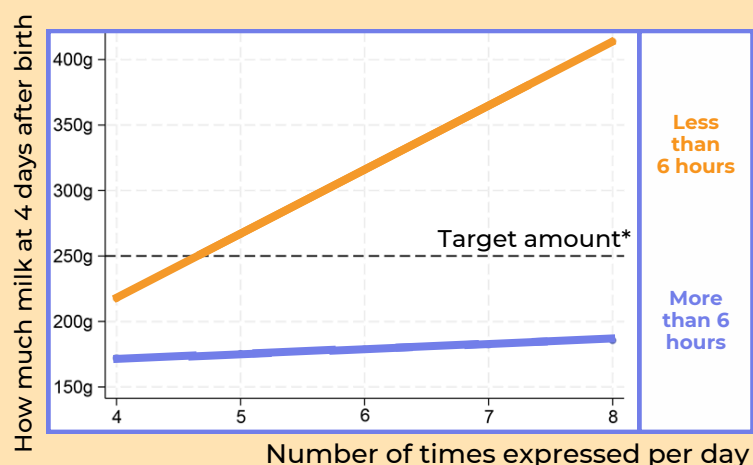


Those who expressed within 6 hours of giving birth could express about 90ml more milk per day on average, four days after birth

By three weeks after birth, there was no difference in the amount of milk

Those who expressed within 6 hours of giving birth got more milk each time that they expressed, on average

We could see this effect at four days and at three weeks after birth



So what?

Expressing sooner after birth is good because:

- a sick baby gets colostrum more quickly
- more milk can be expressed in the first week after birth
- mothers (or parents) might not have to express as often in the weeks after birth

- Try to express colostrum within 6 hours of giving birth
- Expressing within 2 hours may have extra benefit
- Keep expressing every few hours once you've started

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

