

NICU Tips

Congratulations on your new baby! Here are some tips to help you navigate the NICU and establish a successful breastfeeding journey.

Colostrum: Available In Small Quantities

- Begin expressing your colostrum within 1-6 hours of delivery.
- Every single drop is filled with nutrients and antibodies that protect your baby from infections and help to mature your baby's digestive tract.
- While babies born before 34 weeks may have difficulty coordinating sucking, swallowing, and breathing to be able to breastfeed, colostrum can be provided as mouth care on a special swab to provide protection until breastfeeding is possible.
- Your milk may be fed with a tube until your baby is able to breastfeed.



Milk Expression-Early and Often

Expressing milk is important if your baby is unable to breastfeed right away. Here's what you can do:

Maintain milk supply

If your baby is unable to breastfeed soon after birth, express your milk 8 or more times every 24 hours to establish and maintain your milk supply.

Build a milk stash

Ask for a hospital-grade pump to use in the NICU, containers approved for milk storage, and labels with your baby's name and medical record number.

Pump & store milk properly

Follow the NICU instructions for pump hygiene, expressing milk, storing, and transporting breast milk. Look for Nest's Milk Handling and Storage document on the Nest Patient Resources section of our website.

Label pumped milk

Be sure each milk container is labeled with baby's name, birthdate, and date and time the milk was pumped.

Baby helps your body make milk

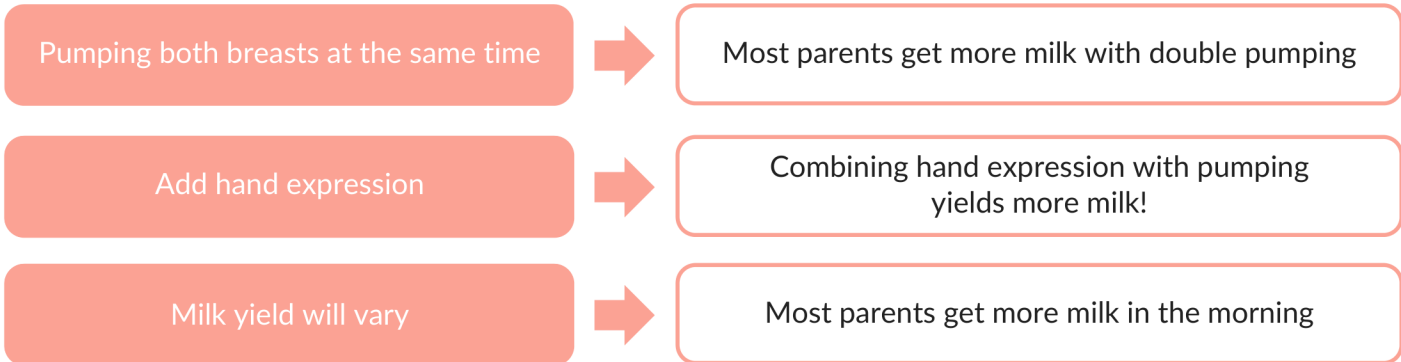
Milk release, known as 'let-down,' is caused by the hormone oxytocin. The sight, smell, and sound of your baby will cause your body to release oxytocin. Hold your baby skin-to-skin before pumping, and pump near your baby. Watching and listening to videos of your baby and smelling your baby's scent on a piece of clothing when you pump at home can help.

Pro Tips!

- Talk to the NICU staff and let them know that you are breastfeeding.
- Get to know the NICU staff caring for your baby and ask about your baby's plan of care.
- Be present when your baby's doctor(s) make rounds to stay updated on your baby's progress.
- If available, ask to room in with your baby in the NICU.
- Seek support from family and friends: Talk to your loved ones and let them know how they can help you during this time.

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Pumping Made Better



Remember Snuggles and Self-Care

Skin to skin care is wonderful for bonding, and:

- Helps regulate your baby’s body temperature, heart rate, breathing, and blood glucose.
- Reduces stress for you and your baby.
- Increases milk making hormones.
- Helps your baby learn to breastfeed.



Self-care

- Bring some healthy snacks and drinks with you to the NICU to have each time you pump.
- Read or listen to music at your baby’s bedside and get away for a break every day to relax, recharge, and spend some time with family.
- Prioritize sleep to keep yourself rested and energized.

Give you and your baby plenty of love during a NICU stay

Support and information just when you need it are so important. Schedule your follow up appointment with your Nest Collaborative IBCLC by going to our website www.nestcollaborative.com or by calling (888) 598-1554.

We hope that this handout will give you some helpful ideas and support during your baby’s NICU stay! We look forward to continuing to work with you to meet your breastfeeding goals!



Resources
 1. Stanford Medicine Newborn Nursery. (2023). Sick infant in NICU or PCSN. <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/babies-at-risk/mothers-of-nicu-or-pscn-infants.html>
 2. Stanford Medicine Newborn Nursery. (2023). Hand expression of breastmilk. <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html>
 3. Stanford Medicine Newborn Nursery. (2023). Maximizing milk production with hands-on pumping. <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html>
 4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Pumping breast milk. <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/breastfeeding/pumping-breast-milk.html>
 5. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2022). Providing breastmilk for premature and ill newborns. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Providing-Breastmilk-for-Premature-and-Ill-Newborns.aspx>
 6. March of Dimes. (2023). Touching and holding your baby in the NICU. <https://www.marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/neonatal-intensive-care-unit-nicu/touching-and-holding-your-baby-nicu#:~:text=Kangaroo%20care%20is%20when%20you,to%20help%20keep%20him%20warm>