

# Antenatal Banking of Colostrum

**Patient Information Leaflet**  
**Women & Children's Unit**



## **Antenatal Banking of Colostrum**

Exclusive breastfeeding has many health benefits for you and your baby. However, sometimes babies have feeding problems or difficulty stabilising their blood glucose levels soon after birth, for example babies of women with diabetes. Expressing and storing your first milk (colostrum) towards the end of your pregnancy could be useful to give to your baby in these situations until breastfeeding is established. This is known as antenatal banking of colostrum.

Benefits of expressing and banking colostrum before the birth of your baby:

- Helps stabilise your baby's blood glucose levels in the newborn period to prevent hypoglycaemia and neurological complications
- Ensures colostrum is readily available in the early hours after birth
- Reduces artificial milk (formula) being offered to your baby after birth if you have chosen to breast feed
- Reduces the risk of mother and baby being separated at birth
- Helps develop the skill of hand expressing breast milk which continues to be useful
- Encourages a generous supply of colostrum

## **When can I start expressing?**

- Before you begin you should discuss this with your Midwife, Doctor or Infant Feeding Co-ordinator. **Do not start expressing if you are advised against doing so.**
- You can start expressing from 37 weeks gestation
- Ensure you have received information on how to express safely and effectively

## **What happens after the birth of my baby?**

- Where possible you should have uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact immediately following the birth of your baby, for as long as you both want or at least until after the first feed
- Breast feeding should be initiated within 30 minutes of birth
- A member of the Maternity team will be available to help you learn the skills required to breastfeed
- If your baby has feeding difficulties or requires extra milk, you may express some colostrum, or use some of the colostrum you have banked antenatally.

**For information on how to express colostrum speak to a member of your Maternity team who will be able to give you leaflets and practical tips**

### **How to store my expressed colostrum?**

You will be provided with syringes to collect and bank your colostrum, a cool bag and ice pack to transport your colostrum to hospital by your Midwife.

- When you have expressed and collected your colostrum into the syringe it must be labelled with your name, the date and time of collection
- The syringes must be placed into a plastic freezer bag and then stored in your freezer until you are admitted to hospital to have your baby
- When you come to hospital to have your baby you must place the syringes in the cool bag surrounded by the frozen ice packs to keep the syringes frozen during transportation
- When you arrive at the hospital you must give the syringes to a member of the Maternity Team to put in the freezer on the Neonatal Unit **immediately** (small amounts of colostrum defrost very easily)
- When your baby is born the frozen colostrum can be used to supplement your baby's diet if required

# Contact information

If you have any questions or require further information or support please refer to the following contact numbers:

**Infant Feeding Co-ordinator**

**01253 303115**

**Star Buddies**

**01253 303023**

**Diabetes Specialist Midwife**

**01253 655626**

## Notes

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## Options available

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call **01253 655588**.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Do you need information or advice about NHS services? Do you have concerns about you or your family's healthcare or are seeking a resolution to a problem and cannot get an answer to your questions? PALS is here to listen and support you in whatever way they can to ensure your experience of healthcare services is a positive one.

Tel: **01253 655588** email: **pals@bfwh.nhs.uk**

You can also write to us at:

**PALS, Blackpool Victoria Hospital,  
Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website:

**www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

## Travelling to our hospitals

**For the best way to plan your journey to any of the Fylde's hospitals visit our travel website:  
www.bfwhospitals.nhs.uk/departments/travel/**

## Useful contact details

Switchboard: **01253 300000/**

## References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

**Policy Co-ordinator/Archivist  
01253 303397**



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