

# Immune Boost

## Continuing your expressing journey

Information for patients



This leaflet is to support you and encourage you. You are doing GREAT!

### Facts

The importance of breast milk cannot be overestimated; it helps with growth, reduces the risk of infections and other diseases associated with prematurity.



Breast milk is easier for your baby's immature tummy and intestine to digest. It improves growth and weight gain, reduced length of hospital stay and has long term cognitive and metabolic benefits.



Important for preterm babies in the first few weeks. Perhaps you did not intend to breast feed before delivery. You can always decide later if you intend to continue breast feeding and expressing in the long term.

### Breast milk contains:

- Carbohydrates, such as lactose, which supports a healthy balance of bacteria in your baby's stomach.
- Fats that help your baby's brain and nervous system develop.
- White blood cells that help fight infection.
- Proteins, like lactoferrin and secretory IgA, that protect your baby from infections.
- Vitamins that support your baby's growth.



### Why is it important for your baby on the Neonatal Unit

- Only a Mother can do it. It can help increase bonding and attachment when you feel powerless to control the situation you are in. It might have to be only YOU.
- Breast milk is like a medicine. Every drop makes a difference.
- It is easier for their immature tummy and intestines to digest. Tailor made to their individual needs.
- It contains multiple antibodies that protect against infection and boost their immunity. IMMUNE BOOST.
- It has the right amount of fat, sugar, water, proteins and vitamins for your baby's development.
- Contains substances that will naturally soothe your baby.

## Long term benefits of providing breast milk for baby and you are:

### *In mothers it reduces the risk of :*

- Breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Osteoporosis (brittle bones)
- Heart disease
- Obesity

### *Baby:*

- Infections (stomach, bowel, chest, bladder, ear, NEC)
- Allergies
- Cot death
- Diabetes
- Childhood Leukaemia
- Heart Disease
- Obesity
- Readmission to hospital



## TIPS

Some helpful pointers to help with your continued expressing journey. More information is in the expressing booklet.



- The earlier you start to express and the more frequently you express the more milk you will produce.
- Initially the use of pumping is for the stimulation and may not initially collect any milk.
- This is normal. Milk will come if you continue with this.
- Initially use the pump on the stimulatory setting until milk has 'come in'. Milk will usually come in around day 3-4. A sign is when you are gaining roughly 20-30mls on three consecutive pumps. Hand expression should always be done after double pumping until milk has 'come in'.
- Hand expression and massage is always recommended alongside pumping both before and after and should be continued even once your milk has come in.
- The use of double pumping from birth has been found to generate more milk by day seven than hand expressing.
- The use of double pumping is also a time saver, roughly two hours per day if you double pump compared to single.
- By Day Seven you should be able to pump approximately 400mls in 24 hours. Although this seems like a lot as your baby will not need that much milk per day yet, the milk supply you establish now will remain the same to feed your baby as they grow and need more milk and will ensure the long term supply.

- Make sure you are drinking plenty, around 2.5 - 3 litres per day (drinking so that you are not dehydrated. Drinking more water will not mean you produce more milk), and eating a balanced and healthy diet (you need to keep yourself well too).
- Nurses, midwives and doctors on the NNU are always available to help you if you are struggling or have worries or questions. We are always happy to support you.
- Listening to a relaxation-visualisation sound track plus/ minus looking at photos of your baby has been reported to increase the amount of milk expressed> So sit back and try to relax.
- You may choose to cluster express in the daytime, every 1-2 hours and then allow yourself time to rest overnight - aim to wake at least once to express during the night as hormone levels are high during this time and will help with milk supply.
- Ideally gaps of no longer than six hours at night and four hours during the day.
- You should be aiming to express 8-12 times a day.



And remember,

**You are doing an amazing job**





## What did you think of your care?

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