

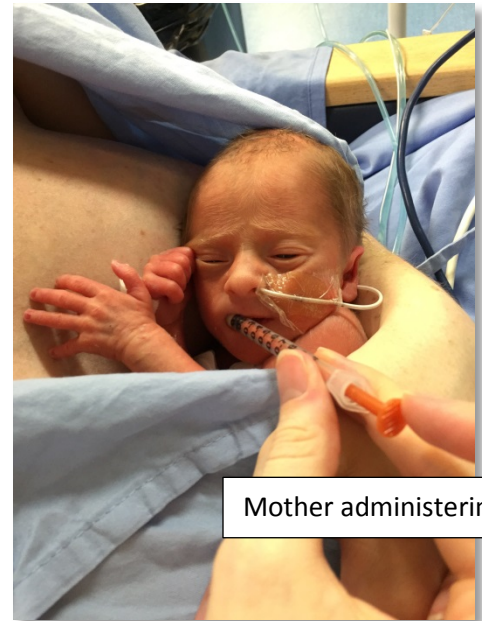
Oral Immune Therapy EVERY DROP COUNTS

What is Oral Immune Therapy?

Oral immune therapy (OIT) is the process of feeding your baby small amounts of your breast milk by syringe. OIT provides immunity to your preterm or ill baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. It can act like medicine for babies who are separated from their mothers and are not yet able to breastfeed.

How is it given?

One drop of your own fresh colostrum – and later breast milk – is placed between the cheek and gum with a syringe. It is given every 2- 4 hours until your baby is able to feed by mouth.



Mother administering OIT

Only your milk provides immune protection to your premature or sick baby.

What is colostrum?

Colostrum is the milk produced in the first few days after birth. It is yellowish orange in color, thick, and sticky. It is rich in vital nutrients, but also contains many of the elements needed to help grow your baby's immune system.

What are the benefits of OIT?

- ✓ Provides immune protection
- ✓ Lowers risk infection and inflammation
- ✓ Babies are able to start normal feeding sooner
- ✓ Supports better weight gain
- ✓ Helps breast milk production

How can I get started?

- Start hand expression within the first hour after birth – or as soon as possible.
- The first dose of OIT will be given as soon as it is available.
- Ask your nurse for supplies.
- Early hand expression helps you to make more milk.

How to hand express colostrum during the first 24 hours

Supplies

- ✓ 1 small feeding syringe supplied in the OIT kit.
- ✓ Have the syringe ready to collect the expressed drops.
- ✓ The nurse will label it with your name, baby's sex, date and time of expression and a green dot to identify it as colostrum.

Hand expression

1. Wash your hands.

2. Massage your breast briefly. Cup your breast with one hand.



3. Place your thumb and first finger at the edge of the areola.



4. Gently push your fingers back towards your chest, and then squeeze



them together while you move them towards the nipple.

5. Move your fingers around the areola in a circle to express from



different parts of your breast.

6. Draw the expressed colostrum into the small 1 ml feeding syringe.

Hand expression takes practice. The first few attempts you may only be able to express a few drops, or none at all, but do not worry as this is normal.



If you are expressing at your baby's bedside, you can give your baby a drop of colostrum on your clean finger. Ask your baby's nurse to show you how.

How often should I hand express?

It is important to continue to hand express every 2-3 hours to stimulate your breasts to make more colostrum. After 24 hours you will start alternating hand expression with pumping.

As you make more milk there are special clean 'snappie' containers you can buy with lids to use for storage.

Important resources

Search these titles on bcwomens.ca:

Feeding your baby: what you need to know explains the pathway and the stages you and your baby will follow as your baby moves from intravenous feeding and/or tube feeding to breast and/or bottle. OIT is a key part of stage one.

Mothers milk in the NICU covers all of the basic tips on how to provide breast milk to your baby, as well as hand expression, pumping, safe storage and transport.

Breastfeeding your baby – expressing a video on hand expression.