

Deearna Withey

Maternity Nurse



Hand Expressing

Underneath the areola, towards the edges, are small tiny reservoirs of milk – often these are misdiagnosed as block ducts, they are not. This is where you start to hand express (expect to feel pea-like structures under the skin, perfectly normal as long as within this area only) the milk collects in these as this is where we express from.

Each breast has 15 sections (lobes) and each of these has its own reservoir of milk. The milk may take up to two minutes to start to flow and then it's easy after this. It is important to rotate fingers around the breast to ensure milk is expressed from all the lobes - with practise, mum will be able to do both breasts at the same time.

Hand Expressing Technique:

- 1** Place one finger under your breast towards the outer edge of the areola and your thumb directly on top of the areola (you should be able to feel the little milk reservoirs).
- 2** Keeping your thumb and fingers in the same position press backwards.
- 3** Gently (keeping mild pressure) press your thumb and finger together and forwards, this will ease the milk out of the reservoirs.
- 4** Release this pressure and this will allow the reservoirs to refill and then repeat steps 2 and 3.

Getting it right:

Around 60% of the women I've consulted have been taught to hand express incorrectly; being advised to start by rubbing down from the top of the breast. This isn't wrong but isn't the most quickest and efficient way. Follow my steps above and after a couple of goes steps 2 and 4 will take seconds, and you'll start to build up a steady rhythm.

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