



How to Hand Express Breastmilk Trainer's Guide

Overview	This module is designed to train WIC staff on why and how to teach hand expression to WIC pregnant and post-partum clients.
Learning Objectives	Participants will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss rationale for teaching hand expression. • Demonstrate hand expression using a balloon. • Demonstrate hand expression using a breast model.
Time:	30 minutes
Background Information	There are many reasons why teaching hand expression of breastmilk to all birthing persons is important. Hand expression can relieve breast fullness, stimulate milk production, and provide milk for the baby. Hand expression is convenient, free, and always available.
Checklist	<p>Equipment needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balloons for all participants Breast models Handout: MIBFN How to Hand Express Breastmilk Skills Checklist for each participant <p>Optional Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: <i>Early Hand Expression Increases Later Milk Production</i> available here. Source: Stanford Medicine Newborn Nursery at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.
Evaluation	Staff will demonstrate their competency of the hand expression technique by completing the activity with balloons and breast models. Check off competency on their Expressing Milk Competency list.



Introduction

Share an overview of the training.

Discuss the role of WIC in preparing clients to hand express breastmilk.

Group activity

The goal is to get the group to identify reasons a WIC client would need to hand express breastmilk.

Pick one of the following, or use a question of your own:

- In what situation would a woman benefit from hand expression?
- When would hand expression be useful to a woman?
- Help us build a list of situations where knowing how to hand express would be helpful to a woman.

Build this list in a large group, or work in smaller groups to make a list and come back together.

List the situations on white board or large piece of paper.

Examples: Free, quiet, environmentally sound, get comfortable with handling their breasts, when baby won't/can't latch, engorgement, separation, comfort while drying up milk, stimulating milk production, use with pumping, etc.

Other topics to discuss:

- When would it be helpful to know this information?
Prenatally? Soon after birth? Any time during breastfeeding?
- When should it be taught?

Demonstration

Use a breast model or balloons to demonstrate hand expression as you explain the principles.

Use Handout: MIBFN How to Hand Express Breastmilk.

Steps for Hand Expression of Breastmilk

1: Instruct client to wash hands before hand expressing when possible.

2: Encourage client to relax & gently massage breast to help stimulate the letdown (MER).

- a. The release of the hormone oxytocin enables the milk to be expressed.
- b. Gently massaging the breast before hand expression can be helpful.
- c. Getting the letdown to happen makes collecting the milk much easier.
- d. Reverse pressure softening also is effective in eliciting the letdown if engorgement is present.

3: **PRESS**

- a. Place fingers, with thumb and index finger one to two inches back from areola.



4: COMPRESS

- a. With the soft pads of thumb and index finger, continue to press backward (inward) and avoid sliding fingers down toward the nipple.
- b. Pressure is being applied behind the pools of milk that lie underneath the areola.
- c. Milk may take a few minutes before it begins dripping.

5: RELAX

- a. Relax the pressure & start over.

6: Go Back and Forth

- a. Go back and forth from 1 breast to the other (right, to left, to right) with up to about 10 compressions on each breast before switching.
- b. As someone learn to express milk, they will discover the “sweet spots” where the milk drops will come out the easiest.

7: Collect Milk

- a. Collect milk into a spoon, syringe, cup, or into the breast shield of the pump

Other methods that mothers sometimes use:

1. One hand above and one hand below instead of just fingers.

Practice with Balloons and Breast Models

Ask participants to practice the hand expression techniques.

As each attendee demonstrates competency of the technique, check off Skills checklist.

Implementation Suggestions

How to implement teaching into clinic.

Divide teaching into sections

Train all at once or a few at a time

Train others in clinic to do the training

Provide a reward when finishing all training

Provide a check off list for them to fill out that they have finished the training.

Ask staff to come up with ideas of how this can be implemented. Let them set goals and rewards.

Encourage staff to teach hand expression to clients.

Evaluating: Ask returning WIC clients if they were taught and what was learned.

Conclusion/Review

ASK:

What do you remember from this training?

How will you use this information in your role at WIC?