

# How much milk to express?

when babies are born sick or early and can't breastfeed

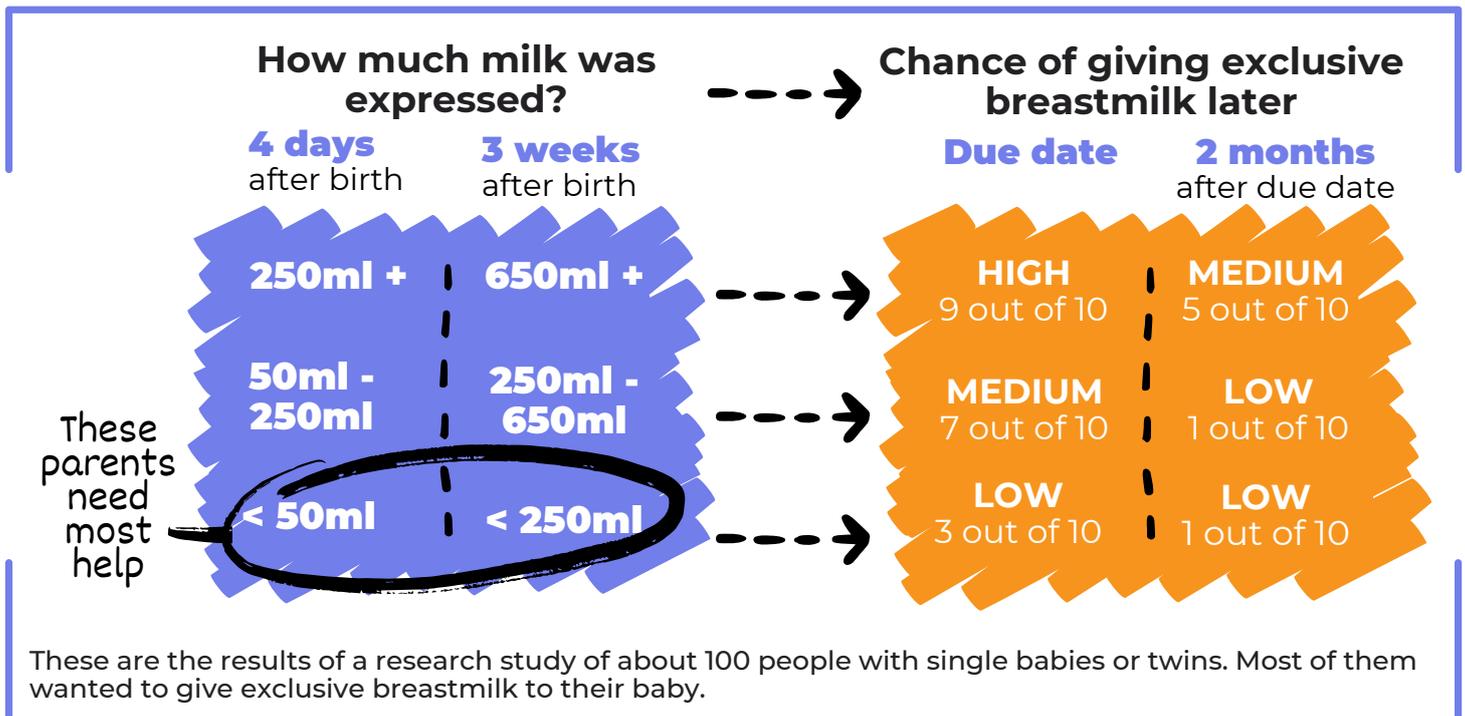
## Does it matter how much milk is expressed in the weeks after birth?



When healthy term babies breastfeed, the amount of milk increases quickly and on average reaches about 750ml per day.

Sick and preterm babies often need very little milk in the first weeks after birth (eg 100-300ml per day). If parents do not hear any other messages, they are likely to target this amount

The amount expressed in the first days and weeks after birth is strongly linked with later milk volumes. If parents don't express much early on, they may not be able to exclusively breastfeed later on. You can use this information to guide your support:



## How can we help families to express more milk?

The following recommendations have most evidence behind them:



- Increase the time spent skin to skin with the baby
- Try to express 8+ times/day, including once at night. Few people who express less than 6 times/day can express the higher amounts above
- Express both breasts at the same time;
- Massage the breasts before starting
- Use relaxation techniques (may have less impact for those who have given birth extremely early)
- Massage the breasts during expressing

The full research results described in this poster can be found here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mcn.13719>