

Oral Care with Colostrum/ Breastmilk in the NICU

Why is mouth care with colostrum and breastmilk Important for your baby?

Your beginning milk called colostrum has unique properties that help in promoting the health and development of your baby. When mouth care using colostrum and/or breastmilk is provided to your baby, the research shows there is a decrease risk for infections and an easier digestion of feedings. This type of care is not actually a “feeding”, it is just putting tiny amounts inside your baby’s mouth.

How can you participate?

Let your bedside nurse know you are interested in learning how to provide mouth care for your baby. Knowing you are interested, the nurse can guide you in learning how to provide this care for your baby. Please know that your participating in this care activity is optional, but very welcomed if you are interested.

How is it done?

After observing your nurse providing mouth care to your baby and receiving hands-on instruction on how to do this care, you are ready to participate with your nurse’s help. Mouth care will be provided on a schedule, during your baby’s hands on time . Please know that you should not offer this care to your baby without your nurse’s knowledge. To provide care you will need to:

- Wash your hands ahead of time, while nurse is preparing your baby for care.
- Using a oral syringe containing 0.2 ml’s of colostrum/ breastmilk ,using a small circle motion, gently apply half of the amount to inside of each cheek (buccal mucosal) area
- Watch for your baby’s response; if you notice any distress, stop and ask nurse for help.

Remember buccal care will be provided with hands on care for your baby. If you want to participate, be sure to check with your baby’s nurse for times that your baby will be receiving this care.