

## **Maternity Services**

### **Breast Compressions**

#### **Why might I need to perform breast compressions?**

Breast compressions may be performed during a breastfeed to increase the pressure in the breast and increase milk transfer to your baby.

Breast compressions may be useful in the following situations:

- Your baby is not gaining weight
- Your baby is having long and/or frequent feeds
- You are experiencing recurrent blocked ducts/mastitis
- Encouraging your baby who falls asleep during a feed to continue feeding

#### **How to do it**

- Relax, make yourself comfortable and gently massage the breast tissue.
- When you feel ready, assist your baby to the breast and start breastfeeding.
- Once your baby is well attached, use your free hand to hold your breast in a 'C' shape fairly far back from the nipple, about 5cm.

**Baby held in cradle position**

**Baby held in cross cradle position**



- Compress the breast tissue, though not so hard that it hurts. Most importantly, try not to change the shape of the nipple (as this may disrupt the attachment). The compression should deliver a good amount of breastmilk to your baby and you will notice your baby swallowing.
- Maintain that pressure until your baby stops swallowing and then release the pressure. Sometimes, you may notice that your baby stops sucking when the pressure is released, but your baby will usually start again shortly when the breastmilk flows. The aim of releasing the pressure is to give your hand and breast tissue a rest and to allow the milk to flow again.

- Once your baby stops swallowing, continue the compressions as above until your baby stops the feed. You can then offer the other breast and repeat the process.

If you have any questions, please ask your midwife.

