

EXPRESSING MILK BEFORE BIRTH: A POWERFUL TOOL FOR SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING

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BACKGROUND:

Antenatal milk expression (AME) has been suggested to some mothers who have Type I or gestational diabetes. In recent years I have been using this tool in any case where I feel there will be potential challenges for successful exclusive breastfeeding.

OBJECTIVE:

To demonstrate a variety of clinical indications in which AME may be beneficial (Fibromyalgia, breast reduction/Augmentation surgery, primiparous over the age of 45 etc.)

METHODS:

Practicing AME in challenging clinical cases. Expectant mothers started AME at 37-38 weeks pregnant and continued until birth, 2-4 times a day for 5 minutes each time.

RESULTS:

Exclusive breastfeeding was achieved in clinical situations that otherwise might not be possible.

CONCLUSIONS:

AME can be a useful tool and simple intervention. When applied in different clinical situations AME may facilitate successful exclusive breastfeeding.

FUNDING SOURCES:

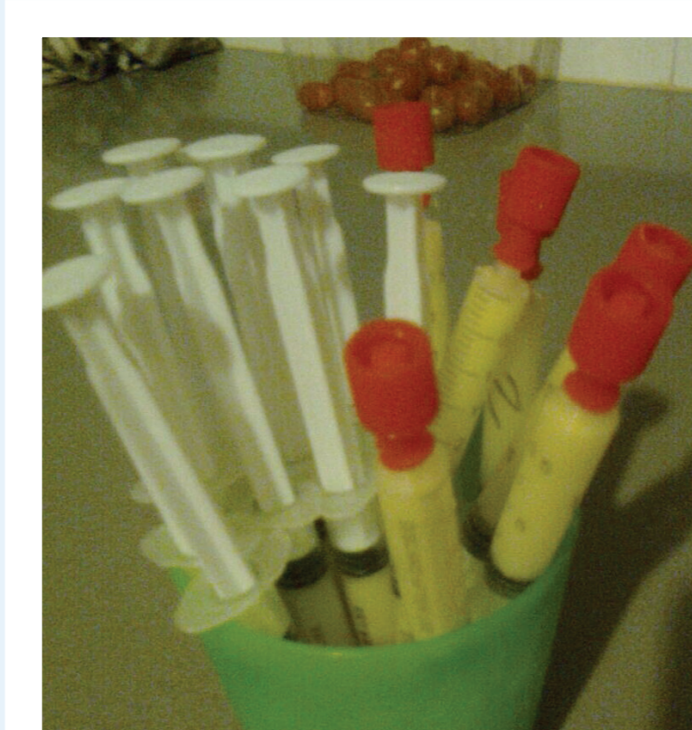
None

REFERENCES

1. Hora Soltani and Alexandra MS Scott, *Antenatal breast expression in women with diabetes: outcomes from a retrospective cohort study.* Int Breastfeed J. 2012; 7: 18. Published online 2012 Dec 1
2. Deanna M. Soper, PhD, *Expressing Milk Before Birth: A Tool for Use in Special Circumstances.* Breastfeeding USA 2013

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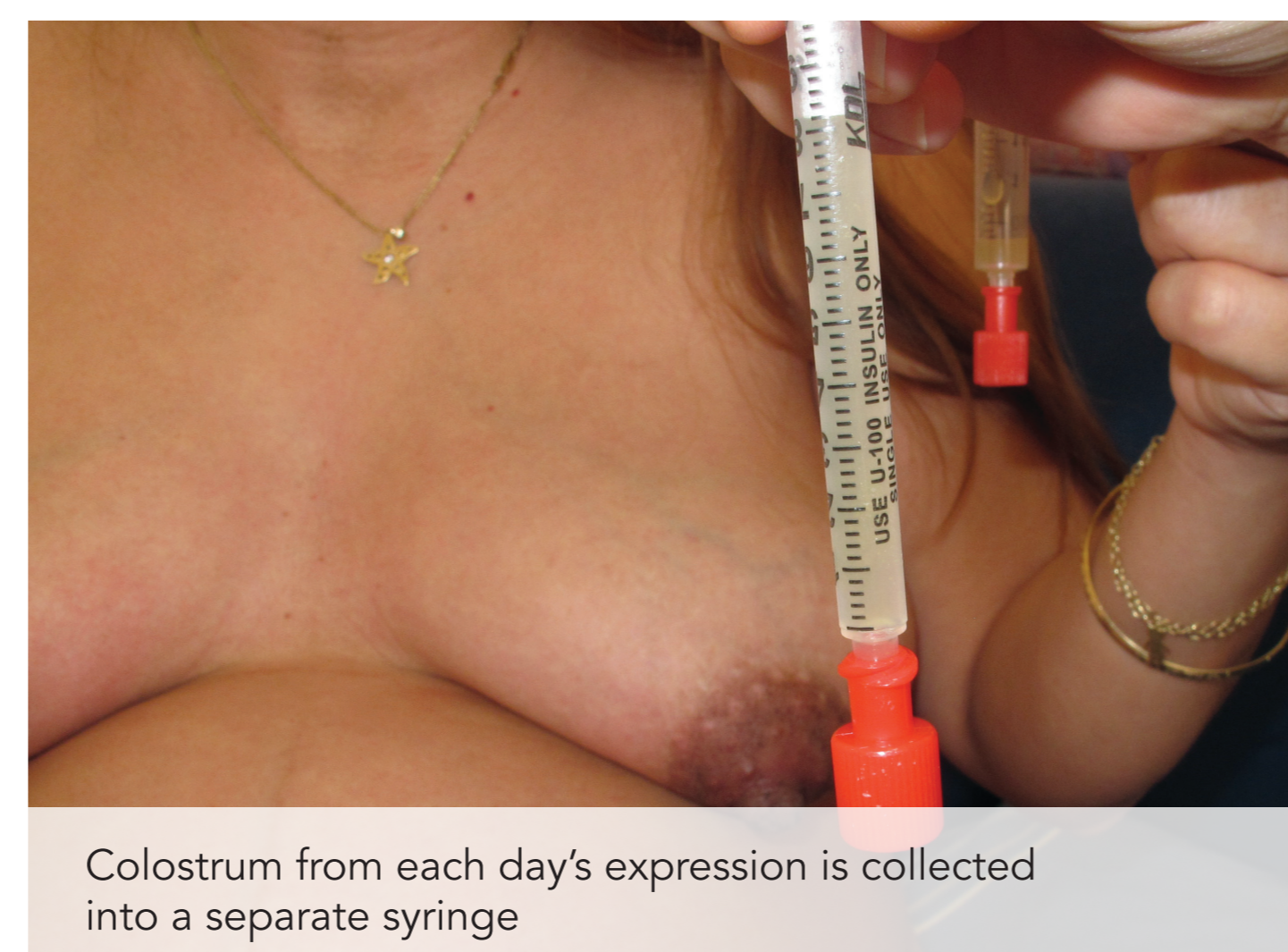
"Expression of milk prior to birth may be beneficial for some, but is not required by all. Today, mothers who know they may need extra colostrum at birth may use this practice. Although more research is needed to better evaluate the safety, efficacy, and benefits of AME, existing published studies can give us insights into the possibility for this practice to positively influence breastfeeding rates and reduce formula supplementation."²



The syringes are kept in a cup in the freezer until birth



CASE 1 PRIMIPAROUS, AGE 30



Colostrum from each day's expression is collected into a separate syringe

Age 30, primiparous, describes herself as having hypersensitive nipples. Since her breasts seemed far apart, and she stated that they did not grow during pregnancy, we began expressing colostrum at 38 weeks.

She collected a very good amount of colostrum even before birth (approx. 30ml), and brought it with her to the hospital. Thanks to that, the husband was able to give colostrum during the first night while the mother felt she really needed to sleep. The following day she was exclusively breastfeeding.

"During the early expressions, because of the complexity of holding the breast with one hand and squeezing with the other, due to lack of skill, my husband had to hold the syringe/ spoon/ and later the cup... and this necessity connected him to the experience and turned it into a shared experience.

And later too, when I needed him, because he was already skilled in expressing he helped me a lot while I suffered from pain in my hands and wasn't able to express."

CASE 2 MULTIPAROUS, AGE 35



Colostrum is collected into a small 1ml plastic teaspoon, and then transferred and stored in a 1ml syringe

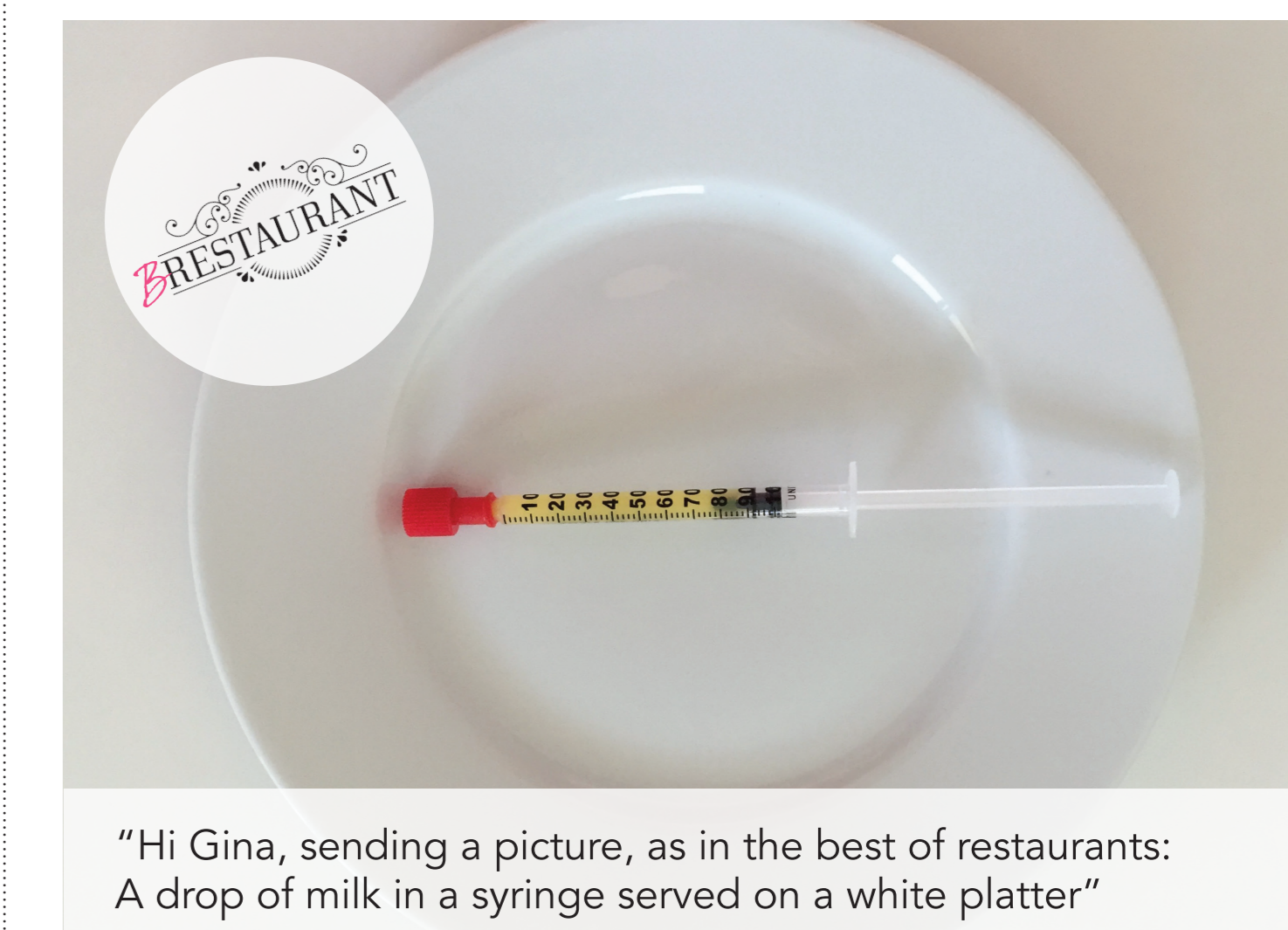
Aged 35, had breast reduction surgery 12 years before. After her first birth, she was told it would be impossible to breastfeed after reduction surgery.

Second pregnancy, first meeting took place at week 35 for setting expectations, breast estimation and providing information. Second meeting, week 38, learning manual expression, beginning of colostrum expression twice daily until birth.

"I knew I would have difficulties, not only due to the breast reduction, but also because of the cesarean. I looked for a Lactation Consultant specializing in breast reduction and I found Gina.

I knew nothing about expressing the colostrum before birth and heard about it for the first time. For me the primary goal for starting to express colostrum was to have peace of mind during the first days following the birth. One less thing to learn after birth!"

CASE 3 MULTIPAROUS, AGE 47



"Hi Gina, sending a picture, as in the best of restaurants: A drop of milk in a syringe served on a white platter"

Second pregnancy at the age of 47 from an egg donor. Breastfeeding is highly important to her.

First birth at age 45, despite constant support during the first days following the birth, the intensity of the first two days was very difficult for her. She didn't breastfeed exclusively at first and wasn't able to achieve exclusive breastfeeding later on.

Second pregnancy, first meeting at week 37 and beginning of colostrum expression. After giving birth, despite the fact that the breastfeeding was very intense, she reached exclusive breastfeeding at 1 week postpartum.