



Engorgement Management

Whether or not you plan to feed your baby breast milk, your breasts began making milk while you were pregnant. About 2-5 days after your delivery, your breasts naturally start to make more milk. Your breasts may feel heavy, warm, swollen, and may become painfully engorged. This will gradually go away if your breasts are not stimulated to make more milk.

If you are not planning to breastfeed or pump your milk, and you want to stop your breast milk production, you can use one or more of these steps to relieve discomfort:

1. Apply cold compresses (ice packs over a layer of cloth), 10-15 minutes on, and 10-15 minutes off; repeat as needed.
2. Express a small amount of milk, using gentle massage or hand expression. Do this only as needed for comfort and apply ice again immediately after expressing any milk.
3. Take Ibuprofen unless you have been told not to by your doctor or medical provider. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
4. Wear a well-fitting supportive bra that does not have wires.

Do not bind or put a lot of pressure on your breasts. Binding can lead to problems like mastitis, plugged milk ducts, and more discomfort.

Severe engorgement can lead to blocked milk ducts and breast infection, called mastitis. Mastitis needs to be treated with antibiotics. Warning signs that you may need to have a doctor or other health professional assess your breasts:

1. Fever
2. Flu-like Symptoms
3. Any redness including streaks and/or redness associated with firm lumps
4. Continued pain after the above suggestions

You should feel better in about 3-5 days. If you have any questions or concerns call your doctor, a lactation consultant, or the URMCM Breastfeeding Medicine Clinic at 585-276-MILK (6455).