

Lactation after the loss of your baby

Children's Emergency Department

Information for Parents

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We are very sorry that your baby has sadly died. One of the most distressing physical symptoms after the death of your baby can be breast pain and the production of breast milk. This leaflet has information on how:

- to stop your breast milk production.
- to ease the physical symptoms of breast engorgement that you may have during this difficult and emotional time.

Natural milk production

The amount of milk produced in the breast will vary from person to person. It will reduce naturally over a period of time. If breastfeeding has already been established, your breasts may continue to produce milk for some time.

It is very important not to suddenly stop the production of milk if breastfeeding has already been established. This may raise the risk of serious breast engorgement and mastitis.

What is engorgement?

- Engorgement is when the breasts become swollen, firm and painful.
- It can happen between 2 to 5 days after the death of your baby. Your breasts can leak milk and feel uncomfortable for up to 7 to 14 days. This can settle on its own.
- If very engorged, your breasts can become hard, shiny, warm and slightly lumpy to touch. Breast engorgement actually helps to stop the production of breast milk. You do not have to have painful breast engorgement. It can be avoided.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Mastitis

Mastitis is inflammation of the breast. If it is not treated it can develop into a more serious infection.

Symptoms include:

- Red, swollen area of the breast that is hot and painful to touch.
- Breast lump or area of hardness on the breast.
- White or blood stained nipple discharge.
- Flu like symptoms including fatigue, chills and fever.

If you have any of these symptoms please contact your midwife, health visitor or GP. You may need to have antibiotics.

Ways to ease discomfort

There are a few ways you can reduce milk production. These include prescribed medication and a milk reduction routine. These are a few suggestions to help ease engorgement:

- Take regular pain relief.
- Wear a support bra all the time.
- Use breast pads to soak up leaking milk.
- Use cold compresses or gel packs on the breasts.
- If your breasts feel very full, hand express a small amount off for comfort.
- Apply washed and chilled cabbage leaves to the breasts.
- Have a warm bath or shower to let the breasts leak naturally. Make sure the shower water jets are not directly on the breasts.
- Sleep in a semi upright position to avoid pressure from heavy breasts.

Reducing your milk supply

If you were expressing regularly for a premature or ill baby you will need to slowly reduce the amount of breast milk produced. You can do this by increasing the time between hand or pump expressing, over a few days and then coming to a stop. We would suggest the following:

Day 1 Pump each breast for 5 minutes every 4 to 5 hours.

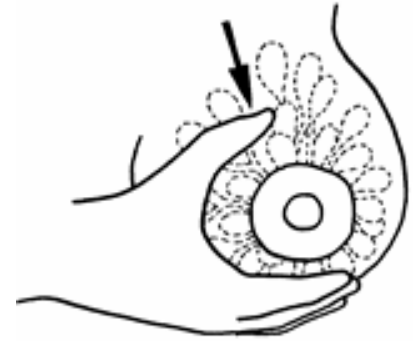
Day 2 Pump each breast for 3 to 5 minutes every 6 hours.

Day 3 Pump each breast just long enough to relieve discomfort.

Hand expressing

Hand expressing simply means gently squeezing milk out of your breast using your hand. It should not be painful either before, during or after expressing.

- Place finger and thumb about 2.5 cm from the base nipple in a C shape.
- Using forefinger and thumb compress in a steady rhythm. Do not slide your fingers along the skin. Milk may take a few minutes to flow, if milk does not flow move fingers slightly up or down the breast and try again.
- When the milk is dripping easily, collect it into a clean container, such as small cup.
- As the flow of milk slows down or stops move your fingers around your breast 2.5cm from the base of the nipple. Swap to the other breast when the first breast is feeling more comfortable.



Try not to express too much. Just do enough so you are comfortable, or you will encourage more milk to come.

Medication

- There is a medicine called Cabergoline (Dostinex) which can help stop milk production.
- You can use it alongside a milk reduction routine.
- The dose is 0.25 mg. You take this 2 times a day for 2 days. Your midwife or GP will be able to arrange this for you.

Milk donation

Not every woman wants to stop lactating at this difficult time. You can give milk to the UK National Milk Bank. It can be used to treat premature and sick babies.

Tel: 020 838 33559 www.ukamb.org

The funeral

Around the time of your baby's funeral is going to be highly emotional. This unfortunately can affect your milk production. You may have engorgement even though you thought things were settling down. If possible,

- sit down and support your breasts with your arm.
- let people know not to hug you too hard if your breasts are painful.



Local and national support

Babyloss Support Leicester www.babylosssupport.org.uk Tel: 0740 040 2744	The Laura Centre www.thelauracentre.org.uk Tel: 0116 254 4341
The Bodie Hodges Foundation www.bodiehodgesfoundation.co.uk Tel: 0116 243 6367 ext 302	Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity www.uk-sands.org Helpline: 0207 436 5881
Child Bereavement UK www.childbereavementuk.org Tel: 0800 028 8840	Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk Helpline: 0845 030405
The Lullaby Trust www.lullabytrust.org.uk Helpline: 0808 802 6868	

Contact details

We will give you details of a key worker who will support your family through the coming days and weeks. This key worker may be part of the Children's bereavement team, Maternity Bereavement team or another specific professional for your family. If you do not have their details and need advice or support please call 0116 258 7742.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to the North West Perinatal Palliative Care network for producing the guidance that forms the bulk of this leaflet.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
 على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
 જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
 Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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