

SUPPRESSING LACTATION



During this time, you may find that your emotional pain is aggravated by the physical pain of this weaning process. We encourage you to be very gentle with yourself and to follow the steps that bring you not just the most physical comfort, but also emotional comfort. Even if your goal is to dry your milk up, it is not unusual to be curious about the milk that would have nourished your baby. Some individuals want to see the milk and to taste it. If having milk in your breasts makes you feel connected to your baby, you are not alone. Take the time that you need to allow this weaning process to happen at a rate that feels comfortable for you

STRATEGIES TO EASE DISCOMFORT

- Wearing a firm, well-fitting bra both day and night supports your breasts and keeps you comfortable(You may need a larger size bra for a while)
- Use breast pads to soak up leaking milk. Disposable or reusable ones work equally well. Change them as they become wet.
- Relieve pain and swelling by putting cold packs in your bra or inside a wrap, or use cold compresses after a shower or bath.
- Cold cabbage leaves worn inside the bra can also be soothing. Wash and dry the leaves before use and cut out any large, bumpy veins. Keep them in the fridge as they need to be cold. Change the leaves every 2 hours or when they become limp. Continue using the leaves until the breasts stop feeling overfull.
- If your breasts are sore and full, have a warm shower or bath, or dangle your breasts in two bowls of warm water. This may be enough to allow some milk to leak out. In the shower, start with lukewarm water and slowly increase the temperature. Take care as it is easy to burn yourself, especially when the skin is stretched tight. Use a plastic chair or stool in the shower if you cannot stand for long.
- Drink when you are thirsty. Cutting down fluids will not help reduce your milk supply.
- Take a pain reliever such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Drink sage tea, which is thought to reduce milk production.
- Medicine to stop milk production is no longer recommended, as it can have serious side effects.





What else do I need to know?

Sometimes the breasts continue to produce a few drops of milk for weeks, months, or longer after weaning. Avoid nipple stimulation, as this may cause a small supply of milk to continue.

Engorgement (painful, overfull breasts): If your breasts become engorged and the ideas given above do not ease your discomfort, it may help to express all the milk in the breasts, just once, with an electric breast pump. This can relieve the pressure and from then on, you may be able to prevent it building up to that point again.

Blocked ducts and mastitis: When breasts are left very full, there is a risk that one or more of the ducts that carry milk to the nipple will become blocked. A lump forms and the breast begins to feel sore. Sometimes there is a red patch on the skin or the breast may feel hot. If the blockage remains, milk can be forced out of the duct and into the breast tissue, which becomes inflamed. You may get the shivers and aches and feel like you are getting the 'flu'. This is called mastitis and can come on very quickly. See your doctor if you get the flu-like symptoms or if you cannot clear a blockage within 12 hours. If this happens, you will need to express more milk than usual to clear the blockage. If mastitis is not treated, a breast abscess may develop. Fortunately, these are now quite rare.

If you have an established milk supply

If you have been pumping for or nursing your baby before he or she died, you will probably want to continue to pump periodically to help your body adjust to the decreased demand and avoid engorgement, plugged ducts, and mastitis.

You can adjust your schedule so that, over time, you pump less and less. For example, if you have been pumping 6 times in 24 hours, for a few days you could drop to 5 times, and then to 4. You can continue this process until you are no longer pumping at all. In addition, you can follow the suggested protocol above to help your body to stop producing milk.