

Patient information factsheet

Reducing your milk supply following birth

Your milk supply will begin to be produced following the birth of your baby. A hormone called prolactin is released to help maintain the milk supply. This information will help you to cope with the discomfort this may cause.

We can give you a drug called Cabergoline as a single dose by mouth soon after the placenta is delivered to help prevent the action of prolactin and the production of milk. Sometimes more than one dose may be necessary; your doctor will prescribe this if needed.

It is helpful to wear a good fitting bra to give support, because your breasts may become slightly fuller and heavier. It is safe to take Paracetamol or Ibuprofen tablets if you can normally take them, but make sure you do not exceed the normal dose.

Engorgement often occurs around three to four days after birth and can last about 48 hours. If your breasts do become full, engorged and uncomfortable you can use purpose made cooling gel breast shaped inserts in your bra or cooled cabbage leaves. There is no good evidence to say these treatments are effective, although many women have found them helpful.

Remove cabbage leaves from the core, discard any large veins, wash and dry the leaves thoroughly and place in the fridge to cool. Place enough leaves over the breast to cover the swollen area and replace every 20 to 30 minutes when the leaves begin to wilt. Repeat as necessary. Do not use cabbage leaves next to the skin if it is broken or damaged, but you can use them on areas of the breasts where skin is undamaged.

You should not express milk from your breasts unless advised to do so, because the milk will be replaced as it is removed, therefore possibly causing more problems.

Contacts

If you have any worries you can contact your midwife or speak to a member of the Breastfeeding Babes team on:

Mobile telephone: 07786 267584

Telephone: 023 8079 8451 between 10am and 1pm, Monday to Friday

New Forest Birth Centre: 023 8074 7690 (24 hours a day)

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.