



Mercy Health
Care first

Your important health information

Suppression of lactation: Reducing or stopping your milk production

You may need or want to stop your breasts from making milk
This could be soon after birth, before you are making a lot of milk, or after you have started breastfeeding and/or expressing

Possible reasons for suppressing milk production

- You do not wish to breastfeed
- You decide to stop breastfeeding or expressing your milk.
- You are prescribed a medication that is not safe to take whilst breastfeeding.
- Your baby has passed away during your pregnancy (after 16 weeks) or after birth.

What to expect

- Milk will start being made from the second day after birth, even if you have not breastfed or expressed your breasts
- Your breasts may feel uncomfortable and full, this could last for a few days to a few weeks
- It can take about a month for your breasts to completely stop milk production
- If you experience symptoms such as red areas on your breasts, painful lumps, a high fever and general aches and pains, you may have developed Mastitis. It is important that you visit a doctor as soon as possible (see Mastitis handout)

How to keep your breasts as comfortable as possible

- Wear a well-fitting bra day and night for breast support
- Wear breast pads if you are leaking milk.
- Apply a cold pack or compress inside your bra
- Cold cleaned cabbage leaves may provide further comfort
- Take mild pain relief medication if needed
- Handle your breasts gently as they can bruise easily when swollen
- Express a small amount of milk if your breasts are feeling too full

If you are already producing milk

- It is safer to slowly reduce the amount of milk you make rather than stopping breastfeeding or expressing suddenly.
- Slowly cut down the number of breastfeeds over a week to a month.
- If you are expressing but not breastfeeding, slowly increase the time between each expressing session and cut back the amount you express.
- Once you are making less milk, express just enough for comfort.

Please note: Expressing small amounts of milk when needed is important as this will help you feel more comfortable and it will not interfere with your efforts to stop milk production.

- There may be medications that can be used to help suppress milk production
- Medication are most effective if taken before your milk production has started and usually given on the first day after giving birth.
- Talk with your doctor if you want to know whether medication is a suitable option for you

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

Mercy Hospital for Women
Breastfeeding Support Service
Phone: 03 8458 4677

Werribee Mercy Hospital
Breastfeeding Support Service
Phone: 03 8754 3407

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline
Phone: 1800 686 268
www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Maternal & Child Health Helpline
Phone: 13 22 29

Private Lactation Consultants
www.lcanz.org

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This document provides general information only and is not intended to replace advice about your health from a qualified practitioner. If you are concerned about your health, you should seek advice from a qualified practitioner.