



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 MHVL handout *Mastitis*)

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
- Hand 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 express 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 are medications that can be used to suppress milk production:

- Talk with your doctor if you want to know whether medication is a suitable option for you.
- Medication is most effective if taken before your milk production has started and usually given on the first day after giving birth.

Further Information

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

Mercy Hospital for Women

Breastfeeding Support Service

Phone: 03 8458 4676

Emergency Department:

Phone: 03 8458 4000

Pharmacy

Phone: 03 8458 4666

Werribee Mercy Hospital

Breastfeeding Support Service

Phone: 03 8754 3407

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline

Phone: 1800 686 2 68

www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Maternal & Child Health Helpline

Phone: 13 22 29

Private Lactation Consultants

www.lcanz.org

Acknowledgements

Produced by: Breastfeeding Support Services
MHW and WMH

Date produced: June 2018

Date of last review: August 2021

Date for review: August 2023