

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 comfortable

- Wear a well-fitting bra for breast support.
- Apply cold packs and/or take mild pain relief medication if needed.
- Handle your breasts gently as they can bruise easily when swollen.
- A warm shower or bath may encourage milk to naturally leak.
- Hand expressing a small amount of milk if your breasts are uncomfortably full.
- Wear breast pads if you are leaking milk.

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.

Medications for suppressing milk production:

- are not usually prescribed due to possible side effects
- can be prescribed in specific situations, please discuss this with your doctor
- are 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

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