



Engorgement

Engorgement occurs if the breasts become overly full with milk. It often happens about three to five days after delivery. It can also happen if the baby doesn't nurse often enough. The breasts can become swollen, hard, sore, red and warm to the touch. The fullness may reach to the armpits. In addition to the discomfort, engorgement makes it hard for the baby to latch on. The tips below will help:

- Before latching the baby on, relieve breast fullness (this will make latch-on easier for the baby and more comfortable for you!) Here are three different ideas you can try:
 1. Apply a warm compress for a few minutes or massage your breasts while taking a warm shower. This will help get the milk flowing.
 2. Hand-express some milk first so the breast is soft enough for the baby to latch on.
 3. Apply pressure to your breast. Using both hands, place the flats of your fingertips around the areola (the dark part around the nipple). Apply a steady, gentle pressure inward toward your ribs for at least 1 minute. This will help relieve the swelling.
- After latching the baby on, gently massage your breast while nursing to increase milk flow.
- Be sure to nurse often so your breasts do not become overly full. Wake the baby to nurse if he sleeps longer than 3 hours during the day or 5 hours at night.
- Nurse on the most engorged side first.
- After nursing, apply ice packs (or a package of frozen vegetables if you don't have ice) for about 10 minutes.
- Avoid pacifiers and formula. The less you nurse, the more engorged you will become! Avoid pumping, unless the baby does not soften the breast after nursing.
 - Lie on your back as much as possible. (It helps to keep the breasts elevated.)
 - Take ibuprofen or Motrin for pain relief.
 - Home remedy – “Cabbage leaf compress.” Discard some of the outer leaves of cabbage, wash the inner ones and crush them slightly. Wear them inside bra for about 20 minutes. Apply several times during the day. This helps to reduce the swelling. (Caution: Excess, long-term use can reduce milk supply.)
 - Call your doctor or lactation consultant if symptoms don't improve in 24 hours.

Don't give up! Challenges with breastfeeding are temporary. Get help. Your breast milk offers your baby benefits that will last a lifetime.