

## Engorgement

### What is engorgement?

- A tight, full breast
- Can happen when your milk comes in (days 2-5).
- Can happen if you miss a feeding/pumping
- Can be caused by unremoved milk, swollen tissue or a combination of both
- Your breast may be as hard as your forehead (breasts should be as soft as your cheek)
- You may feel warmth, tenderness, throbbing
- How to prevent Engorgement?
- Nurse or pump at least every 2-3 hours/day
- Do not go longer than 4-5 hours/night without nursing/pumping

### How do you treat engorgement?

- Gentle breast massage before and during nursing/pumping
- Warm (not hot), moist compress for 5 minutes before nursing/pumping
- Cool compress after nursing/pumping (alternating 15 minutes on/15 minutes off)
- Ibuprofen or Motrin (if your doctor says it is safe for you) may help reduce inflammation
- Cabbage leaf compresses may be helpful

### What complications are possible from engorgement?

- Lower milk supply
- Difficulty latching baby
- Pain
- Plugged ducts (feels like a lump or hardened area)
- Mastitis (reddened skin, fever, chills, flu-like symptoms)

### When to seek help from your physician:

- When a plugged duct does not go away after 24 hours
- When you have a fever or chills or flu-like symptoms or reddened/hot skin

### Hand Expression and Massage Video:

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/65196007> Breastfeeding Medicine of North East Ohio

Ask a member of your baby's health care team if you have questions.

6/2020

*This information does not replace your provider's medical advice, treatment plan, or education provided by your nurse or other care provider. Be sure to follow your personalized plan of care. Nothing on this sheet is considered medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have questions about this or any other medical information, talk with your care provider. Seek help right away if you need urgent medical attention. If you are outside the hospital, call 911. If you are a patient in the hospital, ask your nurse or other member of your care team for help.*

Ask a staff member about interpreters and other language access services and aids, available at no cost to patients and families.  
Pregúntenos acerca de los intérpretes y otros servicios y ayuda para el acceso al idioma que están a su disponibilidad sin costo alguno.

