



Breast Engorgement

What is it?

Breast engorgement is when the breasts are full of milk, swollen or firm, and causing pain. This can make breastfeeding your baby or pumping difficult.

After giving birth, your body stops making colostrum and begins making milk.

To make the milk, your body uses extra blood and fluids in your breasts.

It is normal for breasts to feel heavy and full - for some, the swelling isn't bad, but for others, it feels and looks like watermelons have taken over your chest wall.

How to Prevent It?

Unfortunately, engorgement is a phenomenon that almost everyone who has given birth will experience.

There are some ways to minimize the likelihood of your engorgement getting worse.

- Watch baby for hunger cues.
- Newborns typically feed every 1-3 hours around the clock.
- Before placing baby to breast, if your breasts are hard and swollen, express enough to soften your nipples.
- Completely empty one breast before moving onto the next breast (listen for sounds of slowed sucking or no swallowing).

When + Why

- Several days after birth when your milk "comes in"
- Disrupted breastfeeding routine where milk isn't removed as frequently
- Weaning Cold-Turkey
- Introducing solid foods to baby & reducing feedings
- Baby is ill and not nursing regularly
- Sleep training/night weaning

How long it lasts

24-36 hours and then lessens over the next few weeks

Stimulation is what tells the body to keep making more milk.
No Stimulation = No Milk

Feeding the baby often cues body to make a strong supply.

Comfort Measures

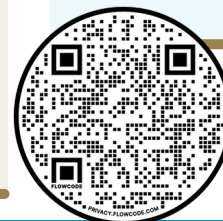
- Feed baby well and often (hand expressing before latching might help)
- Cool compresses after feeding
- Anti Inflammatory medicine as OK by your provider
- Be gentle with your breasts - no deep massage
- Wear loose clothing and avoid pressure against the breasts

Call Your Provider If

- Breasts become as hard as your forehead and you cannot express milk
- Fever of 100.4F or more
- You have body aches or generally feel unwell
- Your baby is having a hard time latching and removing milk
- Your breasts appear red or have red streaking

Signs and Symptoms

- Swollen or Firm Breasts
- Painful Breasts
- Shiny or Warm Breasts
- Slightly Lumpy to the Touch
- Flattened Nipples
- Hard or Firm Areola
- Low Grade Fever 100.4° F (38°C)
- Slightly swollen or tender lymph nodes in or near your armpits.



Schedule a
Consult