

Milk Supply after an Infant Loss

MilkWorks is here to support you through your own personalized journey coping with your loss. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment with one of our International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs). For additional information on infant and pregnancy Loss, please see our information on *Living Through a Loss* or contact HEALing Embrace, www.HEALingEmbrace.org.

When you experience an infant loss, your breasts will most likely produce milk. The following ideas may help your body to adjust.

Decreasing Your Supply

- **Wear a supportive bra** day and night to support your breasts and keep you comfortable.
- **Apply a cold compress** to your breasts for 20 minutes a few times a day. Cool cabbage leaves inside your bra may also provide comfort. Replace the cabbage leaves every 2 hours or when they become limp. Continue using cold packs or cabbage leaves until your breasts stop feeling full.
- Express small amounts of milk from your breasts if they are very hard and they hurt. Remove only enough milk to get comfortable; this will help your supply to gradually decrease.
- **Ibuprofen** (up to 800 mg every 8 hours) can help with inflammation and discomfort. Do not exceed 2400mg in a 24 hour time period.
- **Sage leaves** mimic estrogen in the body, which can slow the production of milk. Consider drinking several cups of sage leaf tea per day.
- **Taking a decongestant with the sole ingredient of pseudoephedrine** (e.g. Sudafed) may also decrease your milk.
- **It can take days to weeks for your milk to completely go away.** Avoid unnecessary stimulation or touching of your breasts and nipples. You may feel let-down sensations for months, or even years, after losing your baby. Every mother will have a slightly different experience.

Avoiding Mastitis

If your breasts become very full and milk is not removed, it is possible to develop a **plugged duct**. You may feel a firm or lumpy area in your breast. If your breast becomes painful and/or red, you feel achy like you have the flu, or you have a low-grade fever (less than 38.4 C or 101 F), you have **mastitis**, an inflammation of the breast, which may or may not involve an infection.

For additional guidance on resolving a plugged duct or treating mastitis, please see our information on *Plugged Ducts & Mastitis*. Once any concerns are resolved, you may resume decreasing your milk supply.

Other Options

- Some mothers find comfort in pumping and donating their expressed breastmilk to a Milk Bank to help another baby in need. To explore this option, please see our information on *Milk Depots in the Lincoln and Omaha Areas*.
- Other mothers may freeze a small amount of breastmilk, or have a piece of breastmilk jewelry made.

MilkWorks
LINCOLN & OMAHA



Community
Breastfeeding
Center

5930 S. 58th Street
(in the Trade Center)
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 423-6402

10818 Elm Street
Rockbrook Village
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 502-0617

For additional
information:

www.milkworks.org