

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 adjust.

Decreasing Your Milk 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 two hours, or when they become limp. Continue using cold packs or cabbage leaves until your breasts no longer feel full.
- Express **small** amounts of milk from your breasts if they are very hard and they hurt. Remove only enough milk for comfort. This will help your supply to gradually decrease.
- Ibuprofen (up to 800 mg every eight hours) can help with inflammation and discomfort. Do not exceed 2400 mg 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, or use a commercial extract as directed.
- A decongestant with the sole ingredient of pseudoephedrine (e.g. Sudafed) may also decrease your milk. Try 30 mg once or twice a day as tolerated.

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 this happens, you may need to pump this breast a bit longer to resolve the plugged duct. If your breast becomes painful and/or red, you feel achy like you have the flu, and you have a low-grade fever (less than 38.4 C or 101 F), you have **mastitis**, an inflammation of the breast. Please contact your healthcare provider or see our Breastfeeding Medicine Specialist to determine if you need an antibiotic.

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 Donation and Outreach Centers and Milk Banks***.
- Other mothers may freeze a small amount of breastmilk as a keepsake, or have a piece of breastmilk jewelry made.

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MilkWorks



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