

Breast Feeding - Discontinuing Breast Milk Production

Choosing to stop producing breast milk is a personal decision. If you have decided to stop providing breast milk for your baby, here are some things you can do to help stop making milk.

We wish to support your decision and to help you with this process.

Your body makes breast milk in response to nursing your baby or expressing the breast milk (pumping). As this stimulation decreases or stops, your body will also decrease or stop making milk. This can be done using an abrupt or gradual method. It may take several days or weeks for your breasts to completely stop making milk. Breast fullness should decrease in 1-3 days.

You may feel emotional during this time. Be sure to take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest. Eat a nutritious diet. Decrease your stress and get the support you need.

Gradual or slow method



(Preferred Method)

- Wear a supportive, comfortable bra until you notice that breast fullness and discomfort has gone away. Using an ace bandage around the breast is not recommended.
- Gradually increase the time between nursing or pumping sessions (For example: Pump every 4 hours instead of every 3 hours. Increase this time every 1-2 days) .
- Decrease the time you express milk. (Pump for 10 minutes instead of 15 minutes. Decrease the pumping time every 1-2 days.)
- Use ice packs (covered with a thin cloth) on your breast for 5 to 15 minutes several times a day after expressing breast milk. Cold cabbage leaves can also be helpful. Place one cold cabbage leaf on each breast and change every 2 hours until breast engorgement has passed.
- Take a pain reliever as needed for discomfort. Consult your health care provider about this.
- Observe for blocked ducts (tender and painful breast lumps) or breast infection (a tender, reddened area along with fever, chills, headache, and general achiness). Contact your breast feeding support person and/or your health care provider if either of these conditions develops.

See the back of this sheet for ABRUPT (SUDDEN) OR FAST METHOD

Abrupt (sudden) or fast method

(Only recommended when there is a condition that requires weaning rapidly.)

- Wear a supportive and comfortable bra 24 hours a day until you notice the breast fullness and discomfort has gone away.
- Use ice packs (covered with a thin cloth) on your breast for 5 to 15 minutes several times a day. Cold cabbage leaves can also be helpful. Place one cold cabbage leaf on each breast and change every 2 hours until breast engorgement has passed.
- Take a pain reliever as needed for discomfort. Consult your health care provider about this.
- Observe for blocked ducts (tender and painful breast lumps) or breast infection (a tender, reddened area along with fever, chills, headache, and general achiness). Contact your breast feeding support person and/or your health care provider if either of these conditions develops.
- You may need to pump just enough breast milk to relieve fullness and discomfort. This will slow the process, but will make you more comfortable.

Call the Children's Mercy Hospital Lactation Management Program Help Line at (816) 346-1309 if you have questions or concerns.