

Weaning after the Loss of Your Baby

This is a very difficult and emotional time. Caring for your own needs and comfort can be hard. Here are some tips to help you during this time.

Emotionally:

- If you just gave birth your body is going through many physical and hormonal changes. These changes may make your grief and pain feel more intense. Be easy on yourself as your body gets back to normal.
- Be sure to take care of yourself. Try to rest and eat well, even if you don't feel hungry.
- If people ask to help you, let them.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- You may still feel sad even as you move ahead with other parts of your life.

Physically:

- It may take a few days before your breasts feel less full.
- Your breasts may continue to leak for several days or weeks.
- If your breasts hurt, you may want to continue to pump for a few days.
- Change your pumping schedule so you are pumping less often until you are no longer pumping.
- Pump or hand express just enough breast milk to feel comfortable. Do not completely empty your breasts or that will tell your body to make more milk.
- Watch for blocked ducts (painful breast lumps) or breast infection (a tender, red area on your breast with fever, chills, and body aches). Call your doctor if you have signs of a breast infection.

Other things to try:

- Take a pain reliever like ibuprofen or acetaminophen as needed for pain. If you are allergic to those medicines, talk to your doctor.
- Wear a comfortable bra until the breast fullness has gone away. Do NOT tape or bind your breasts.
- Use ice packs covered with a thin cloth on your breasts for 5 to 15 minutes several times a day. Avoid putting ice directly on the nipples.
- Cold cabbage leaves can help. Place one cold, raw, green cabbage leaf in your bra and change every 2 hours, or when wilted, until breast tenderness and fullness are gone.
- Contact Children's Mercy Breastfeeding and Pumping Helpline at 816-346-1309 if these things do not help or breasts continue to feel full.

Donation:

- If you have frozen breast milk or wish to continue pumping, you may be able to donate to St. Luke's Heart of America Mother's Milk Bank. This milk bank provides donor breast milk to Children's Mercy and other local hospitals. Many mothers find comfort knowing their milk can help another sick baby. If you are interested, please contact St. Luke's Heart of American Mothers' Milk Bank at 816-932-4888 or online at kcmilkbank@saintlukeskc.org.

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