



IMPORTANT

- Apply warm, moist cloth to breasts before breast feeding.
- If possible, feed at least every 2 hours.
- Hand express or pump for comfort only.
- Apply cool compresses after feeds for comfort.

Breastfeeding Engorgement

What is breast fullness?

- Fullness is a common and temporary condition when breasts are larger and heavier with slight tenderness.
- Fullness begins the second to the sixth day after delivery, usually peaking about the third or fourth day.
- Breast fullness is caused by increased body fluid and increased amount of breast milk.
- Breast fullness usually resolves 2-3 weeks after delivery.

What is engorgement?

- Breasts are swollen, warm, red, and painful.
- Surrounding skin may be tight and shiny; nipples may be flattened.
- Engorgement may start the third to fifth day after delivery.
- A low grade fever may develop.
- Engorgement usually lasts 12-24 hours if baby is breastfeeding well.

What can you do for engorgement?

- Breastfeed often, at least every 2 hours.
- Put warm, moist cloths on the breasts or take a warm shower or tub bath right before feeding.
- Gently massage and hand express breasts enough to soften the nipple and areola before each feeding.
- Ensure the first breast that the baby feeds from has softened before switching to the second side.
- If you feel you need to hand express or pump, do so only enough for comfort.
- Some mothers find relief by applying a cold compress to breasts between feedings (for example, a bag of frozen vegetables, frozen popcorn kernels or crushed ice) for up to 10 minutes.
- You may find it helpful to apply green cabbage leaves (refrigerated) directly to the breast; remove when wilted and reapply. Stop use once

engorgement decreases.

- Avoid soothers as this may decrease the time the baby spends nursing.
- Avoid supplementing your baby with milk from a bottle.
- Restricting fluids does not help to avoid/treat engorgement.
- Try to ensure that your bra does not have any pressure areas.
- Some mothers use an anti-inflammatory/analgesic to assist with the discomfort.

Adapted with permission from:
Breastfeeding Committee for Saskatchewan
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region