Breast Care After Infant Loss

After a loss, lactation can be either encouraged or suppressed. Whatever your decision, our lactation consultants are available to support you through the weaning process, donation process and beyond.

To Decrease or Stop Milk Production

- Our lactation consultants are available to make a custom weaning plan with you.
- If your milk has already come in, you may need to slowly cut back by dropping a pumping session every day or slower until your breasts are more comfortable. Milk production is a supply and demand system; your milk volume will go down as you remove less milk.

Tips Dealing with Breast Discomfort

- The breasts often become swollen when weaning, cold packs will help. Use ice or gel packs as often as 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off. You can repeat this routine as often as needed. Take care to avoid frostbite by wrapping the ice pack in a thin cloth.
- If you are full and uncomfortable, use cold packs first, and if you still feel full, express a little milk for comfort. Pumping or hand expressing, remove just enough milk to relieve the pressure. Warm showers can also help some of the milk to leak out.
- Wear a bra that supports your breasts but is not too tight.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen may help with pain and swelling.
- Peppermint tea or lozenges can help slow milk production.
- Sage tea or seasonings can help slow milk production.
- Pseudoephedrine (follow directions on box) helps to stop milk production.

To Establish or Maintain a Full Milk Production for Donation

- Your pumping routine should reflect your personal goals. Some people pump for a few days or weeks, while others continue pumping longer.
- Consider pumping up to 6-8 times/day. You can choose a pumping schedule that is reasonable for you. There is no minimum amount of pumping or milk for a bereavement donation.
- Pump for about 15 minutes, or until your breasts are empty and the milk flow has slowed or stopped.
- Wash your pump parts in hot, soapy water after each use and air dry.

Donating Milk

Some may find comfort in donating their milk. You can donate milk you've already saved as well as any milk you continue to express as you wean. To learn more about this, our lactation consultants can help you contact the Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes (MMBWGL). The MMBWGL provides milk for sick and premature infants in WI and IL. They will include your baby in their memorial celebration of life called "Poppy's Dream".

Please visit the MMBWGL website at http://www.milkbankwgl.org/.
Email: info@milkbankwgl.org.
Phone: **(847) 262-5134**.

When the Milk Stops
This is different for every person lactating. It may take a few days or even weeks. It is normal to be able to express a few drops of milk for weeks or months afterwards. There is nothing you need to do for this.

When to Call
Call your health care provider if you have a fever or flu-like symptoms.

Who to Call
If you need support or have any questions, please call the number below.

American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) Lactation Consultants
(608) 890-8227

Email: lactationhelp@uwhealth.org.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2025. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7690