

Breast Care After Infant Loss

We want you to know you have our support during this difficult time. As you grieve the loss of your little one, you may feel many emotions. Sometimes these emotions are stronger because of the physical changes your body is going through. You may feel discomfort in your breasts as your body stops making milk.

Suggestions for Dealing with Breast Discomfort

- Wear a bra that supports your breasts but is not too tight.
- If your breasts feel too full, express a little milk for comfort.
- If your milk has already come in, you may need to slowly cut back. Try dropping a pumping session every few days until your breasts are more comfortable.
- Cold packs can help with swelling. Use ice or gel packs as needed. If you are using ice or frozen gel, put it over your shirt to avoid frostbite.
- Ibuprofen can also help with swelling.
- Some women find cabbage leaf compresses helpful. (Note: Do not use cabbage if you are allergic to sulfa.)

Steps for Cabbage Leaf Compress

1. Buy plain green cabbage
2. Rinse and dry the leaves
3. Chill them in the refrigerator
4. Crush the leaf veins with a rolling pin
5. Place a leaf inside each cup of your bra
6. Change the leaf every 2 hours, as it wilts

How long will it take for the milk to go away?

This is different for every mother. 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 after your milk dries up.

Do I need to call my doctor?

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

Can I donate my milk?

Some mothers find comfort in donating their milk. If you would like to learn more about this, our lactation nurses can help you contact the Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes. They provide milk for sick and premature infants.

<http://www.milkbankwgl.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 © 5/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7690