

## Fact Sheet

# Stopping breastfeeding (Lactation Suppression)

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If you have decided not to breastfeed your baby, it is normal for your breasts to feel warm, firm and tender 2 to 5 days after birth.

### Suggestions for breast comfort

- Wear a firm (not tight) supportive bra / crop top (no underwire).
- Wear nursing / breast pads to absorb any leaking milk and to keep you comfortable.
- Drink when you are thirsty - drinking less will not help reduce your milk supply.
- Use cold / gel packs after your shower. Wrap them in a cloth - do not apply directly to the skin of your breasts. Apply for 10-15 minutes every hour (if needed).
- Handle your breasts very gently as they can bruise easily.
- Pain-relieving medication may help reduce any discomfort (Paracetamol / Ibuprofen).
- **Expressing milk** to soften your breast will relieve discomfort. You are not aiming to empty your breasts, just to express a small amount for comfort.
  - Express by hand or with a pump.
  - Reduce the frequency and time of expressing gradually. By removing less milk, less often, your supply will decrease without causing you problems.
- The length and time to dry up your milk will depend on your supply; this should occur over 2-3 weeks for most women.
- Check your breasts for tenderness, lumps and redness. If you are worried or are feeling unwell, seek help from your doctor or nurse / midwife. Refer to the fact sheet *Mastitis*.

- Medications used to stop breast milk (lactation) are not usually recommended because of the side effects. These medications may not be effective 24 hours after birth.

**Most mothers are able to suppress lactation by limiting the volume of milk removed, wearing a firm bra and using cold packs and mild medication for pain.**

### Stopping breastfeeding in the weeks or months after birth

- Gradually reduce the number of breastfeeds / milk expressions – do not stop suddenly, as this may cause blocked ducts and mastitis (see fact sheet *Mastitis*). If you are worried or feeling unwell, seek help from your doctor or nurse / midwife.
- Any breast milk you express can be fed to your baby unless you have been advised medically not to.
- Once your breastfeeding stops, your periods may return in 4-8 weeks, if not before. You will then potentially be able to fall pregnant again if not using contraception.
- It is normal for you to be able to leak or express a little milk weeks or months after you stop breastfeeding / expressing.

### On our Newborn Baby Care page, see also:

[Bottle Feeding - Important Information](#)

[Bottle Feeding - Cleaning and Sterilising Equipment](#)

**We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service.**

**Please send your feedback to:**

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