**Engorgement**

Engorgement describes the painful swelling that occurs when the breasts become overfull from failure to remove milk adequately or frequently enough. The most common time for engorgement to occur is in the early days postpartum, when breastfeeding is beginning and feeding patterns are irregular.

* Normal fullness usually occurs between 3-5 days after delivery. Some mothers’ breasts get very hot, hard, and swollen.
* Frequent feedings will help minimize engorgement. It is recommended that you breastfeed your infant, 8-12 x in 24 hrs. Keep your baby close and watch for hunger cues.
* If you miss any feedings or have difficulty latching, you may want to use a pump to express your milk.
* Apply a cold compress to the breast for no longer than 15 minute intervals. If cold compresses are kept on too long this could increase swelling.
* The use of green cabbage leaves to the breasts for about 10 minutes may help with swelling as well. Leaving cabbage on too long without a break can lower your milk supply.
* Typically heat will make swelling worse, but it is recommended, if you cannot get your milk to letdown before feeding or pumping. You may use a warm compress for 5-10 minutes before nursing.
* Use gentle breast massage before and during breastfeeding. Massage different areas of your breast in a circular motion. You can also massage from your breast towards your armpit to help remove lymphatic fluid which contributes to swelling.
* If your infant is not latching, try pumping to remove some milk and then attempt latch.
* Renting a hospital grade pump or purchasing an electric top of the line pump is recommended over a hand pump.
* Try to avoid bottles and pacifiers as it may cause nipple and flow confusion/preference.

If your symptoms do not improve in 24-48 hours or worsen, notify your Lactation Specialist or MD.

**Cornerstone Lactation Services**

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