

Engorgement

Many mothers have breast engorgement in the first few days after birth as the breastmilk supply is being established. Breast engorgement happens when the breasts have more breastmilk than is being removed, either by the baby or a pump. After birth, moms have more blood flow and more lymph fluids in the breast tissues, which also adds to the engorgement. During this time, breasts may feel very hard, tender to the touch, have red or hot areas, have flat nipple(s), and all of this may make it hard for your baby to latch on.

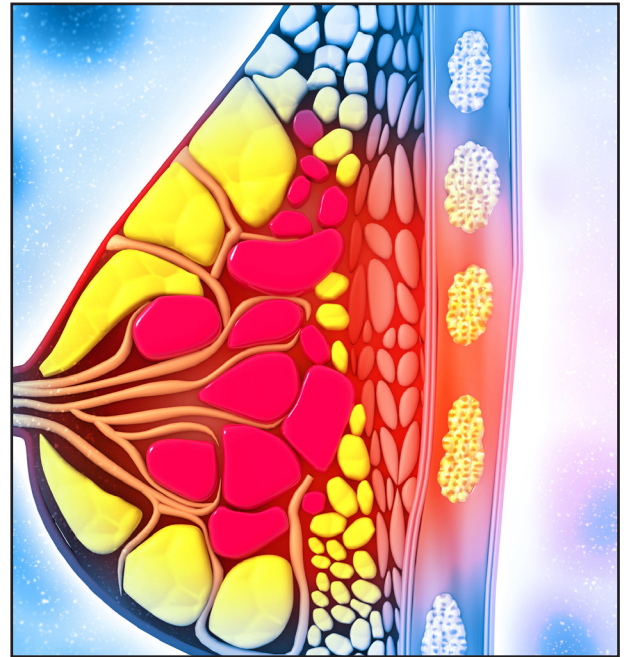
Engorgement is common in new mothers, but can happen at any time. The best way to handle it is to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Tips for Preventing Engorgement

- Breastfeed as soon as possible after your baby is born.
- Breastfeed often. This can mean feeding every 2 to 3 hours or sooner. You may even have to wake your baby to feed to avoid engorgement.
- Make sure your baby has a good latch and is getting milk from the breast.
- Don't limit your baby's feeding session. Your baby should feed until your breasts are soft. Always offer both breasts during a feeding session.
- Avoid pacifiers or using bottles.
- Drink fluids. Staying hydrated is a good way to keeping milk flowing.

Tips for Dealing with Engorgement

- Breastfeed often. Feed before your breasts get too heavy or firm to avoid becoming engorged.
- Start feeding from the fuller breast.
- Make sure your baby is correctly latched and positioned.
- If needed, hand express or pump to soften your breast so that your baby can latch on.
- Apply a warm cloth and massage your breast before the feeding to help soften your breast and bring on a letdown. You can take a warm shower or soak your breasts in warm water to help relieve the engorgement if your milk is flowing freely.
- If your breasts are very swollen and you are not having a letdown, a cold cloth **BEFORE** feedings can reduce swelling so that milk can flow more freely.
- Use cold cloths between feedings to relieve swelling.
- Talk to your health care provider about using pain medications.



Seek Medical Help If

- Your engorgement is not gone in 24 hours
- Your breast becomes red
- You get a fever greater than 100°F
- Your baby cannot latch onto the breast or has a hard time nursing
- You develop sore or injured nipples

Call the 24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline for immediate assistance 1-800-833-4642



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