



Engorgement

Overview

Engorgement is the feeling of fullness, swelling, and tenderness that occurs in the early days of lactation due to the swelling of tissue as well as the onset of milk production. Engorgement typically peaks 3-5 days after birth. Although engorgement is typically experienced in the early days of breastfeeding, the feeling can occur anytime milk production exceeds milk removal.

Tips for Preventing Engorgement

1. Breastfeed early and often- within the first hour of delivery is ideal.
2. Don't limit baby's time at the breast unless indicated by the MD.
3. Ensure an effective deep latch every time baby nurses.

Factors that Increase the Risk of Engorgement

1. Baby not latched correctly.
2. If mom is not pumping when baby is not breastfeeding or receiving a supplement.
3. Lack of removal of colostrum/milk if baby and mom are separated.

Treatment of Engorgement

1. Breastfeed frequently- do not skip or delay any feedings.
2. If milk is not flowing easily, use moist heat applications before feeds, for not more than 5 minutes.
3. Gently massage the breasts during pumping or feedings to help empty breasts.
4. Take ibuprofen every 6 hours to help with pain and inflammation. Remember- engorgement is due to milk + inflammation! Always check with your doctor before taking medications.
5. Ice for 10 minutes after feeds to help with swelling.
6. Wear a supportive, but not too tight fitting bra.
7. Avoid pacifiers and supplements if possible.
8. Ensure proper latch with every feeding.
9. If needing, okay to use pump or hand express to comfort. Try and avoid over-pumping or "pumping to empty breasts."

If engorgement lasts longer than 24-48 hours, or no improvement after 24 hours reach out to Lactation Consultant!