

Engorgement

What is Normal?

It is normal for breasts to feel full, warm, and uncomfortable when your milk “comes in”. This usually happens 2-5 days after giving birth. It can last for about 1-2 days. With engorgement, breasts feel firm and the skin can feel tight. Engorgement can also make it difficult for your baby to latch to the breast.

Ways to Prevent Engorgement:

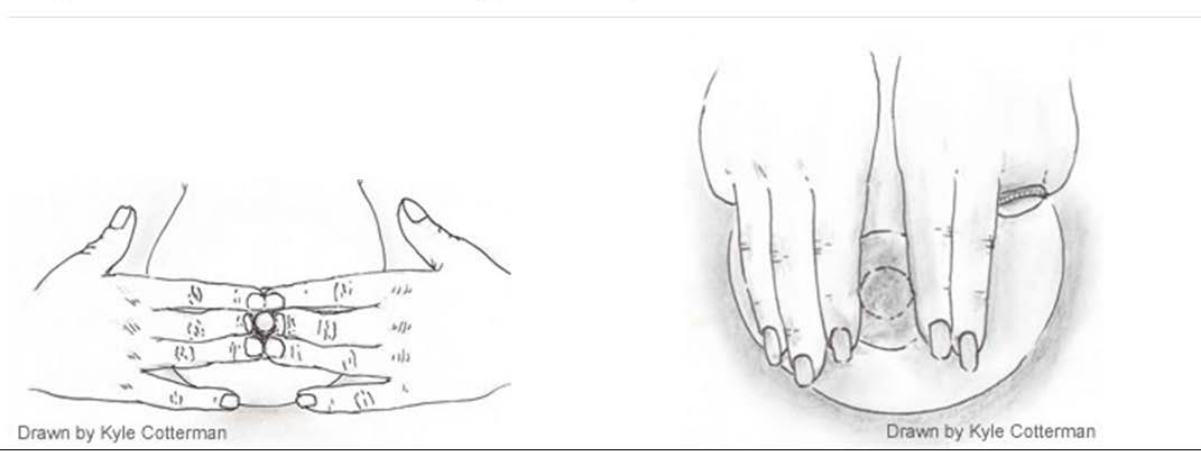
- Breastfeed or pump often, at least 8 times in 24 hours
- Don't skip feedings, even at night. If your baby is sleepy, wake him every 2-3 hours to breastfeed
- Let baby finish the first breast before changing sides. Switch sides when she pulls off or falls asleep.
- Make sure latch is comfortable and breasts feel softer after feeding
- If your baby is unable to breastfeed or is not breastfeeding well, express your milk frequently to make sure you have enough milk

How to Treat Engorgement

Before Breastfeeding or Pumping:

- Gently massage your fingertips around the breasts. If lots of swelling, massage from breast towards the arm pit
- Use cool compresses for up to 20 minutes prior to feeding or pumping
- Use heat for a few minutes before feeding or pumping to help milk flow. Don't use heat for more than a few minutes or this can increase swelling
- If baby can't latch because breasts are too firm, use the motions in the picture below

Hold pressure 1-2 minutes and move around nipple until dark part of breast is softer.



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During Feeding or Pumping:

- Massage the breast to help milk flow
- If latch is painful, try taking baby off the breast and latching again once breast is softer
- If pumping is painful, try moving the flange (pump part that looks like a funnel) once your breasts are softer. You can also try setting your pump to a fast speed with low suction. Return to normal settings when your milk starts to flow

In Between Feeding or Pumping:

- If your breasts get uncomfortably full, express milk to comfort
- Use a hand or electric pump on a low setting or try hand expression
- Don't let your breasts get too full, but don't overdo it. Too much pumping will make too much milk
- Use cold compresses between feedings. Use for 20 minutes at a time and repeat as needed
- Use cold, green cabbage leaves on your breasts for 20 minutes, three times a day
- Talk to your doctor about using ibuprofen or naproxen to relieve pain and swelling

If your symptoms do not get better with these tips, call the Breastfeeding and Pumping Helpline at (816) 346-1309. If you have a fever of >100.4 , flu like symptoms, and breast redness, contact your doctor.

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