Review Article

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Breast Engorgement: An Overview

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Abstract

Breast engorgement is a painful and unpleasant condition affecting large numbers of women in the early postpartum period. During a time when mothers are coping with the demands of a new baby it may be particularly distressing. Breast engorgement may inhibit the development of successful breastfeeding, lead to early breastfeeding cessation, and is associated with more serious illness, including breast infection. The birth of a baby is an important event in any family. It is therefore important that for a mother to have a healthy baby, she gives her baby the best nutrition. Breast fed babies are healthier than formula fed babies, so breast milk is the best food for babies.

Breast congestion is associated with hard, painful, throbbing, sore, soft breasts, which women need labour, develop mastitis, or stop breastfeeding temporarily or permanently. The stress associated with breast congestion can mean that women who start breastfeeding may not continue to breastfeed until the first few days after delivery. Proper breastfeeding skills are important for successful breastfeeding. Improper technique can cause breast congestion, and it is especially important to properly secure the chuck during feeding to ensure that your baby can suckle effectively.

Keywords: Engorgement, Unpleasant, Breastfeeding, Infection, Mastitis, Formula feed, Distress.

Introduction

Breast congestion is the development of hard, swollen, and painful breasts when too much milk accumulates in the ducts. Swollen breasts can become very large, tight, bumpy, and tender. The oedema may extend to the armpits, and the veins on the surface of the chest may become more visible

or swollen.

This condition often occurs during the first delivery of breast milk, but can occur at other times as well. This can be quite unpleasant, but it can be alleviated by draining the excess milk from the breast and taking steps to relieve the discomfort.

Breast Engorgement After Birth

It's normal to have some degree of breast engorgement during the first week or two after the birth of baby. An increase in blood flow to breasts along with a surge in milk supply often results in breasts getting overly full. Engorgement that happens in this period is often the most intense a mother will experience. The majority of new mothers experience it to some degree.

This stage of breast engorgement typically starts to get better within a few days as feeding habits take hold and milk production adjusts to meet baby's needs. However, if multiple feeding or pumping sessions are missed after this time, congestion may occur.

Milk Fever

Lactate fever is another name for breast congestion during about the first week after breastfeeding. It is so named because it can cause fever and general fatigue. If you experience any of these symptoms, continuing to breastfeed is the best way to relieve your symptoms.

However, a fever can also be a sign of a breast infection or other condition called mastitis, so check with your doctor to make sure the diagnosis is correct.

Breast Engorgement Symptoms

- Warm
- Heavy
- Tender and painful
- Swollen, which may extend to the armpit
- Hard
- Trouble for baby to latch onto

Breast Engorgement Treatment

- Switch to a bra with more support.
- Take over the counter pain medication (consult with baby's doctor before hand).
- Try ice packs to reduce swelling.
- Try reverse pressure softening, gently press on the area around nipple for about a minute to try to shift some of the engorged fluid away from that area.

Breast Engorgement Prevention

- The key is to not let breasts get overly full with milk.
- Feed baby whenever they are hungry. Breastfeed or pump often or as close to every 2-3 hours to set a routine.
- Pump if skip a feeding, have given a bottle, or if baby doesn't take enough milk or empty the breast enough.
- It can help to use a warm compress or take a warm shower before you breastfeed or express milk.
- Make sure stay hydrated and eat a healthy diet, too.
- Use Different Breastfeeding Positions.

Conclusions

Congestion may occur in one or both breasts. This can sometimes cause throbbing and swelling that extends to the armpits, and any activity going on inside can cause a burning or tight feeling in the chest. Symptoms of breast congestion include shiny, sagging breast skin, and hard and flat nipples. Congestion can even raise body temperature. The most effective treatment for breast congestion is to empty your breasts as often as possible to keep your milk supply going. Therefore, feed as needed 8 to 12 times every 24 hours. Let baby's skin touch breast for as long as possible during the day and night when your baby is awake.

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