

Relieving Engorgement

During pregnancy and for a few days after delivery, your breasts likely felt soft. When milk production increases, or you have more milk than your baby needs, your breasts can feel very full and firm. Engorgement can happen at different stages of lactation. Reducing any swelling and addressing the root cause of engorgement will help the engorgement to resolve. Proper care for engorgement will help you to feel better and to protect your milk supply.

Common Causes of Engorgement

Engorgement often occurs early postpartum or when there has been a change to breastfeeding routines. For example:

- Transition from colostrum to mature milk
- Making more milk than your baby needs
- Not feeding based on your baby's cues
- Skipping feedings or pump sessions
- Milk production increase after a growth spurt
- Baby or pump not taking out milk effectively
- Swelling from IV fluids received during labor and delivery
- Breast swelling causing slower milk flow in cases of severe engorgement



💡 Pro Tip!

To avoid and deal with engorgement in the early days after birth, breastfeed often - at least 8-12 times in 24 hours!

Ways to Ease Engorgement

The goal is to reduce the swelling, protect your milk supply, and relieve discomfort.

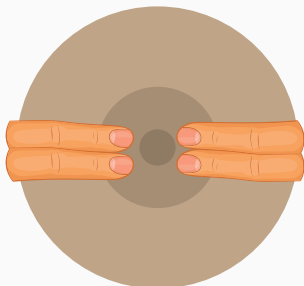
- Continue to feed your baby one cue and avoid limiting baby's time at the breast
- Use cold therapy (cool packs, frozen veggies, etc. covered in a towel)
- Use very gentle lymphatic drainage massage
- Consider over-the-counter anti-inflammatories, acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- If necessary, you may hand express small amounts of milk to relieve pressure between feedings
- Avoid pumping or hand expressing large amounts - only express enough to relieve discomfort

Reverse Pressure Softening

Making the area on your breast where baby must latch softer will make it easier for baby to latch to an engorged breast

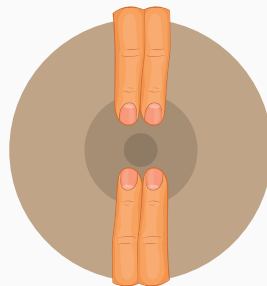
Step 1:

Place index fingers on either side of the nipple at the areola



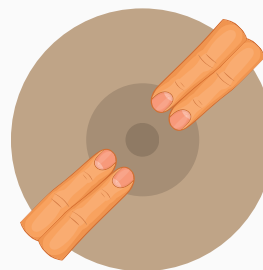
Step 2:

Push gently toward your ribs for about 30 seconds



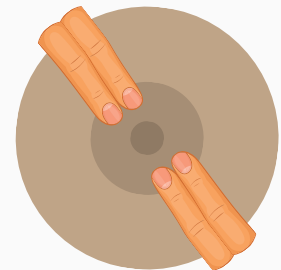
Step 3:

Rotate your fingers around the areola, placing them as instructed above in Steps 1 and 2



Step 4:

You'll feel the area at the base of your nipple get softer, making it easier for your baby to latch



Your Nest Collaborative Lactation Consultant can assist you in understanding why you have engorgement and work together with you to create a plan for making things better.

Schedule your follow up appointment with your Nest Collaborative IBCLC by going to our website www.nestcollaborative.com or by calling (888) 598-1554.

