

Managing Breast Fullness After the Loss of Your Baby



Please accept our heartfelt sympathy for your loss.

Our thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time.



Breast Fullness

During this time of grief and sadness, your body will go through other changes. You need to know that in about 4 to 6 days your milk supply will likely increase. This can be uncomfortable, both physically and emotionally.

Mothers often just put up with the breast fullness until the milk begins to 'dry up'. Some mothers have found some comfort in donating their milk.

Please take time to review the options, and choose what is best for you.

Family practitioner: Refers to family doctor, midwife, or nurse practitioner



Option 1: 'Drying Up'

It can take 1 to 2 weeks for your milk to dry up - or longer if you express or pump your milk. During this time, it can be uncomfortable.

These tips can help ease the discomfort:

- Wear a comfortable, supportive bra. If it is too tight it can cause blocked ducts.
- Try cold compresses on your breasts for 15 to 20 minutes, as needed during the day. One study showed cold cabbage leaves work just as well as cold compresses.
- Consider taking acetaminophen [Tylenol] and/or ibuprofen [Advil, Motrin]. Follow the directions on the package.
- Express or pump a little breast milk. Express only enough to feel comfortable. Too much expressing makes more milk.
- It is best not to put heat on your breasts since it could increase swelling. However, some women find it can help to take a warm shower and just let the milk flow a little.

Cautions:

- Drink when you are thirsty. Drinking less doesn't mean you make less milk.
- Massage any red, hard, painful areas in the breast. Use gentle pressure toward the nipple. If massaging does not help, call Public Health or your family practitioner.

See your family practitioner as soon as possible if you have:

- a fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F)
- pain in breasts continues or gets worse
- muscle aches



Option 2: Donating your milk

Some mothers find comfort in donating their milk to help sick or tiny babies.

The Provincial Milk Bank collects, processes, and sends donated breastmilk to Neonatal Intensive Care Units across B.C. The Milk Bank is located at BC Women's Hospital.

If you are interested in donating your milk, check with the Milk Bank to see if you qualify (online or by phone). Most women can donate their milk if they are healthy, live in Canada, and do not smoke or use drugs.

Each donor must go through a screening process to make sure the donated milk is safe. The screening process includes answering some questions about your health (takes 5 minutes) either over the phone or in-person, filling in some forms, and having some blood tests. The blood tests are done to check for certain diseases. The initial 'Expression of Interest' form and process can be found on the Milk Bank website.

After you complete the initial form, it can take 1 to 2 weeks for the Milk Bank to contact you. In the meantime, you should start pumping to keep your milk supply.

Common reasons why you might not qualify as a donor:

- You take any medication on a regular basis, including antidepressants (there are some exceptions to this).
- You smoke or use of tobacco products.
- You test positive for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), HTLV (Human T-lymphotropic Virus), hepatitis B or C, or syphilis.
- You are at risk, or your partner is at risk, for HIV.
- You have lived or traveled in certain countries.
- You have used illegal drugs in the last five years.

To learn more about donating your milk



www.bcwomensmilkbank.ca



604-875-3743



Scan QR Code
to access site

Once you have completed the screening process, the Milk Bank accepts any amount as long as it is properly stored. You are given instructions on how to collect and store your donated milk.

You can drop off your milk at your local health unit.

Health Unit Milk Collection Depots

	Weekdays	Weekends Statutory Holidays
Abbotsford	604-864-3400	604-864-3418
Agassiz	604-793-7160	1-866-320-7582
Burnaby	604-918-7605	604-918-7601
Chilliwack	604-702-4900	604-702-4903
Cloverdale	604-575-5100	604-575-5101
Delta North	604-507-5400	604-507-5462
Delta South	604-952-3550	604-507-5462
Guildford	604-587-4750	604-587-4761
Hope	604-860-7630	1-866-320-7582
Langley	604-539-2900	604-613-2872
Maple Ridge	604-476-7000	604-897-4892
Mission	604-814-5500	604-217-1205
Newton	604-592-2000	604-592-2049
New Westminster	604-777-6740	604-527-4806
Surrey North	604-587-7900	604-587-7908
TriCities	604-949-7200	604-949-7220
White Rock/ Surrey South	604-542-4000	604-542-4073

Thank you for considering donating your milk.

Take time.
Be gentle with yourself.



Do what feels right for you.
Whichever choice you make, we support you.

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca