



How to manage engorgement

A few days after giving birth, your body starts to make more milk. For a day or two, it is normal for your breasts/chest to feel full, warm, and uncomfortable. This is called “engorgement”.

TO MANAGE ENGORGEMENT

- Continue to follow your baby’s feeding cues. Feed early and often, at least every 2 to 3 hours.
- Support effective milk removal from both sides with a good position and a deep latch.
- Apply a wrapped ice pack or cold compress to your breasts/chest between feedings.
- Consider taking ibuprofen to reduce pain and swelling.

IF IT IS HARD TO LATCH YOUR BABY

Engorgement can cause the dark area around your nipple (areola) to become hard and swollen. This can make it harder for your baby to latch. A few things can help:

- Hand express a small amount of milk to soften the areola.
- Massage your breasts/chest gently before and during feeding.
- Apply heat for 1 to 2 minutes before feeding.
- Try “reverse pressure softening” – see *next page*.

REVERSE PRESSURE SOFTENING

- Try reverse pressure softening right before you feed your baby.
- This technique pushes fluid away from the areola, helping to make it softer so that baby will be able to latch more easily.
- With your fingers or fingertips on the areola, gently press back into your breast/chest. Hold for about one minute. If very swollen, hold longer.
- Try different positions with your fingers (as shown in the images below).



WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Connect with a health care provider if you:

- Have trouble feeding your baby.
- Have more pain, redness, or red streaks in one area of your breast/chest.
- Develop a fever, chills, or body aches.

LEARN MORE



Video: [Reverse pressure softening](#)
(International Breastfeeding Centre)



Webpage: [Breast engorgement](#)
(La Leche League Canada)

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