Suppression of Lactation

Whether your decision to suppress lactation is one of choice or necessity, we’d like to support your decision and help you by providing the following information.

Although colostrum can be present during the second trimester, during pregnancy hormones that suppress the full production of breast milk are at high levels in your body. With the delivery of the baby and the placenta, these hormone levels drop rapidly, and your body will start the process of producing milk. When the milk comes in, usually about 48 to 72 hours after delivery, your breasts may be full and uncomfortable.

If you don’t plan to breastfeed, it’s best to avoid stimulation to your breasts, as this may cause your body to release the hormones that stimulate continued breast milk production.

Engorgement, leakage and discomfort tend to peak on the fourth postpartum day and gradually decrease over the next 10 to 12 days.

Some things to assist you during this period:

- Wear a supportive, well-fitting bra within six hours after delivery. Avoid bras with underwires. A sports bra works well.
- Minimize stimulation to the breasts. Avoid extended warm showers.
- For comfort, and to reduce the swelling, you can place ice packs on your breasts and underarms. Frozen packs of peas or corn work well because they conform to the shape of your breast. Be sure to wrap ice packs or frozen veggies in a thin towel or other cloth to protect your skin.
- If you’re not allergic to ibuprofen, it’s often used to relieve pain and reduce swelling.
- If your breasts become too uncomfortable, you may express just enough milk to relieve the pressure. Over-pumping can cause your breasts to make more milk.
• Nursing pads may be necessary for milk leakage in some cases.
• Avoid excessive salt intake.
• Do not limit fluid intake. This can lead to dehydration.