



Postpartum Breast Engorgement Care Guides

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I. Causes and Possible Effects of Breast Engorgement

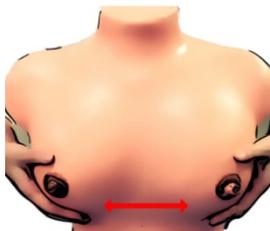
Breast engorgement refers to an excessive fullness of the breasts, mainly due to blocked milk ducts (milk not being removed in time). Causes include delayed breastfeeding initiation, improper baby latching, insufficient breastfeeding frequency, and restricted feeding time. Increased tissue fluid and blood in the breast can also contribute to blocked ducts. If not treated properly, it may lead to mastitis.

II. Symptoms of Breast Engorgement

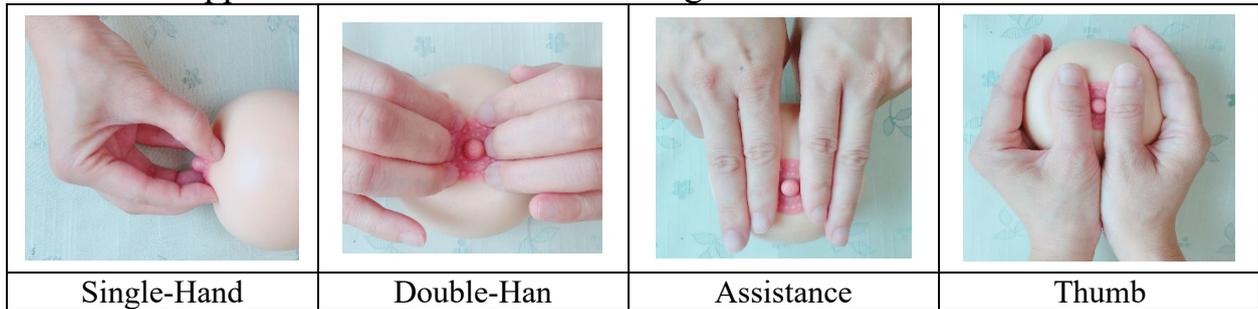
- Swollen areola; overall breast swelling upon palpation
- Mild fever (<math><38^{\circ}\text{C}</math>) lasting less than 24 hours
- Significant pain
- Difficulty in milk ejection

III. Methods for Managing Breast Engorgement

- i. Eliminate possible causes of engorgement: such as mechanical obstructions (e.g., pressure from tight bras), incorrect latching or feeding frequency, breast trauma, stress, or sleep deprivation.
- ii. Direct feeding: Encourage the baby to directly nurse on the breast.
- iii. Frequent feeding: Feed on demand, at least 8-12 times a day (if the baby is unable to nurse, hand express or pump frequently).
- iv. Correct feeding: Ensure proper breastfeeding posture and baby latching.
- v. Comfortable feeding: Relax in a comfortable sitting or lying position while maintaining a positive mood.
- vi. Activation: Stimulate the oxytocin reflex before feeding by massaging the breast (as shown in the diagram), back and neck massage, warm showers, or drinking warm beverages.

Methods	Breast massage	Breast shaking	Gentle stroking
Steps	Start from the top of the breast, gently press in circular motions towards the chest wall.	Lean forward and gently shake the breasts side-to-side to help milk ejection through gravity.	Use fingers or a comb to lightly stroke the breast from the outside toward the nipple to stimulate milk flow.
Diagram			

vii. De-swelling: If needed, apply reverse pressure on the areola to soften it and relieve nipple tension before breastfeeding.



viii. Pain Relief: After feeding, if necessary, apply cold compresses such as a towel, towel gloves, cold pads, wet packs, or cabbage leaves to relieve pain. If pain persists, take pain relief medication as directed by your doctor to alleviate the discomfort from breast engorgement.

Methods	Steps	Diagram
Cold pad compress	<p>Cool the cold pad in the refrigerator for 60 minutes or in the freezer for 15 minutes, then apply it to the breast.</p> <p>Avoid the nipple area, limit each session to 2 hours, and rest for 30 minutes between sessions.</p>	
Cabbage leaf compress	<p>Clean your hands, remove the hard stem from cabbage leaves, and wash them with water.</p> <p>Use the cabbage leaves directly or refrigerate them before applying to the breast.</p> <p>Avoid the areola area to prevent injury. You can apply cabbage leaves up to 3 times a day, for no longer than 20 minutes per session.</p>	

ix. Referral: If the condition persists, consult with healthcare professionals.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. The nurses are very happy to serve you. If you have any questions after discharge from the hospital, you can use the health consultation hotline of Mackay Hospital: Taipei/Tamshui Mackay (02) 25713760, Hsinchu Mackay (03) 5745098. Taitung Mackay (089) 310150 ext. 311, consultation time: Monday to Friday 9:00-12:00 am, 2:00-5:00 pm.

May God Bless You