

## Plan of care for mother who has engorged breasts

### Why has this occurred?

Engorgement may occur if:

- your baby is not latched on well
- your baby has missed a feed
- you are restricting his feeds
- you have weaned your baby from the breast too quickly.

### What to do if your breasts are engorged

#### Prior to the feed

**Heat:** apply some heat to your breast 2 minutes before a feed to help the milk flow e.g. warm flannel, warm shower or put your breasts in a bowl of warm water.

**Express:** if your baby is finding it hard to latch on, try expressing a small amount to soften the breast.

#### During the feed

Check your baby is latched on well. If possible ask a feeding advisor to observe a feed. Let the baby finish the first breast before offering the second.

#### After the feed

1. If the breast is still full, express until you feel really comfortable.
2. Applying cold compress such as crushed ice in a bag, cool pack, bag of frozen vegetables (wrap cold packs in something light to protect your skin) for 15 -20 minutes between feeds may help to reduce the swelling.
3. Some mothers find that a cold green savoy cabbage leaves worn inside a bra also help. Don't forget to take the outer leaves off in case they have been sprayed with anything and change the leaves when they wilt. Use cabbage leaves only while the breast is engorged, as long term use may affect your milk supply.
4. Other mothers find that wearing breast shells for about 20 -30 minutes prior to a feed encourages the milk to flow and relieve the discomfort.
5. Encourage your baby to wake up and feed more frequently to relieve the discomfort.
6. An anti-inflammatory often helps to relief the pain and swelling: see [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) for drugs and breastfeeding
7. Try and wear a good supporting bra. Avoid underwire bras as they may block the ducts and lead to mastitis.

#### Remember

If the problem does not resolve contact the Midwifery Led Unit at UHW,  
Tel: 029 2074 5030 / 5196.