

Breast Problems

Swollen breasts

In the first week after giving birth, when your breasts make more milk, they may swell up and feel heavy, hard, warm and painful.

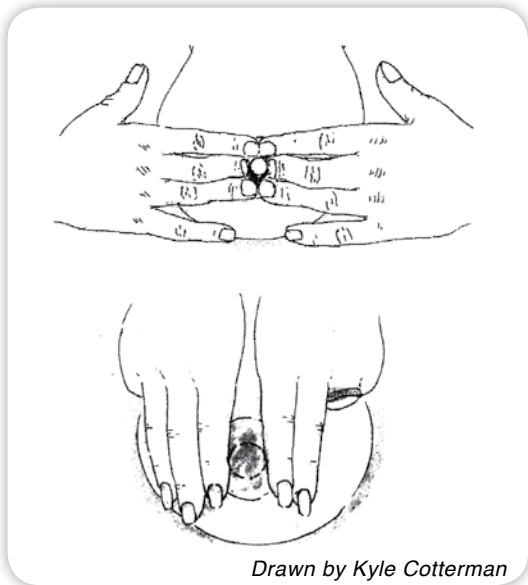


Swollen breasts won't last long if you feed your baby often, both day and night, from birth.



Your baby may find it difficult to get a good mouthful of breast. You may need to help him by:

- expressing a little milk to soften your breasts
- using both thumbs, or your fingers, to press into your breasts around the base of your nipple on the darker area of skin until it softens. Offer your baby the breast while the circle around your nipple is still soft.



Drawn by Kyle Cotterman



Swollen breasts can lead to sore nipples, breast infections, and reduced milk production.



Avoid using dummies or bottles. If your baby wants to suck, let him breastfeed.



Other things that you can try

Before breastfeeding, put a warm, damp towel over your breasts for a few minutes, to help soothe them.

Try standing in a warm shower, with your back to the shower spray, and let the water run over your breasts. A gentle breast massage may also help relieve the discomfort.

Apply ice between feeds. Use crushed ice or bags of frozen vegies wrapped in a thin towel and place them over your breasts for 15 - 20 minutes.

Rinse raw cabbage leaves. Cut out the hard stalk of the cabbage leaf and cut a hole for your nipple. Place them inside your bra. Use new leaves after each feed, or when they become wilted. Stop using them as soon as your breasts feel more comfortable.

Wear a supportive bra - one without wires.

The swelling will pass, and even when your breasts are producing lots of milk they will not be this size again.



Help is only a phone call away:



www.breastfeeding.org.nz