

## Breast care following the loss of your baby: information and advice for mothers with an established milk supply who have lost a baby

Following the loss of your baby, your breasts will continue to produce milk. This can be different for every woman, continuing from a few days, to a few weeks.

Although this is normal, it may be upsetting if your breasts become heavy or uncomfortable.

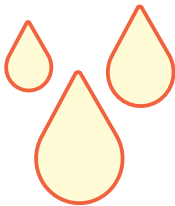
### What you can do to help reduce your milk:



Wear a comfortable supportive bra during the day and night and use pads to absorb natural leakage.



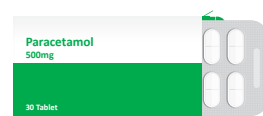
Unless you are feeding or providing milk for another child, **avoid stimulating** your breasts as this may make you produce more milk.



Aim to reduce your milk supply gradually so your breasts remain comfortable. How long this will take will depend on how much you have been breastfeeding or expressing. You may need to use a breast pump initially, gradually reducing the number of times you express and then move on to gentle hand expression. Express just enough to make your breasts feel comfortable rather than 'emptying' your breasts completely. Eat and drink as normal.



Using cool cloths, gel packs or chilled savoy cabbage leaves will help reduce milk production and will be soothing on your breasts.



If you have pain or discomfort, take simple pain killers such as paracetamol (follow the instructions on the packet).

## If you feel unwell or have any of the following symptoms seek medical attention immediately as you may have an infection:

- You have red patches on one or both breasts
- You feel overly uncomfortable
- Your breasts feel tender and hot to the touch
- You are in pain, or
- You have flu like symptoms such as a temperature over 38°C

### If you have an established milk supply, you will need to slowly decrease your milk supply and allow your body time to adjust:

Remember, the time it takes for your milk supply to reduce will vary for every woman, and can take a few days to a few weeks.

### Medication to reduce milk supply:

If you find that, despite these measures, you are still uncomfortable then speak to your midwife or GP about medication that may be needed to help you reduce your milk supply.

### Donating breast milk:

Some women who have lost a baby may find it comforting to donate their breast milk.

Our local milk bank is at Birmingham Women's Hospital, although you can donate to any UK milk bank. There are certain criteria which may exclude you from donating your milk and different milk banks may have different criteria.

### More information on milk donation can be found at:

[bwc.nhs.uk/human-milk-bank](http://bwc.nhs.uk/human-milk-bank) or you can contact the Infant Feeding Team on **07816 061633**.

You can also speak to:

Bereavement team ☎ **0121 507 4395**

Maternity triage ☎ **0121 507 4181 (24 hours a day)**

Infant feeding team ☎ **07816 061 633**

You can contact Sands



**0808 164 3332**

### Reference:

Sands (2016) Pregnancy loss and the death of a baby: Guidelines for professionals. 4th Edition