



# TAMC Breastmilk Suppression, Plugged Ducts & Mastitis

## Suppressing Breastmilk Production

If you are not yet lactating, or are beginning to notice increased breast fullness and desire to suppress lactation, begin the suppression process.

Wear a supportive bra or sports bra night and day and monitor your breast changes.

**\*Don't bind your breasts!** This is an old fashioned idea which is no longer recommended because it can make you very uncomfortable, and may cause plugged ducts and mastitis.

If you are not engorged or swollen do NOT use heat on swollen tissue, use cold packs instead. Cold compresses or gel packs in your bra relieve discomfort and reduce any swelling around the milk glands and ducts.

Decrease breast and nipple stimulation. During showers have your back towards the shower and let the water run over your shoulders to avoid increased stimulation to your breasts.

The breasts make milk faster when they are "empty" and slower when they have milk stored in them.

Therefore:

- Remove only as much milk as necessary to keep from feeling "bursting" or swollen, overfilled or lumpy. Allow most of the milk to stay in the breast.
- Remove milk by pumping and/or hand-expression.
- At first, you may have to remove some milk every few hours. As time goes on and supply decreases, you can go longer between removal sessions and take less out each time.
- After your breasts have been soft for 24 hours without removing milk, you probably can discontinue expressing. However, if breasts fill up again, continue to express enough for comfort.

***\*Watch for any warning signs of plugged ducts, mastitis, fever or breast pain.***

## Plugged Ducts

If you notice a small lump the size of a pea in your breasts, it may be a plugged duct. This occurs when a portion of the breast does not get emptied completely during feedings and/or pumping.

Remedy:

- Apply a warm compress to the area before feeding or pumping
- Massage the lump towards the nipple during a feeding or pumping
- It may take 2 or 3 feedings for it to completely empty. Position your baby's chin towards the area of the lump. This is where the greatest emptying will occur.
- If you find a persistent lump that does not respond to these measures, please see your healthcare provider. It could be a different problem.

## Mastitis

This occurs most frequently in mothers who have had a cracked or blistered nipple or who are undergoing a period of stress such as returning to work, participating in holiday activities or experiencing a change in normal daily routine.

Symptoms may include:

- Sudden high fever
- Hot, reddened area on the breast
- Red streaks on the breast
- Pain and a lump in the breast
- Hard wedge shaped area on the breast
- Flu like symptoms chills
- Extreme tiredness

***\*Call you're your provider or go to the Emergency Department if you experience any of these symptoms.***

Resources: [https://www.lactationeducationresource.com/handouts: Weaning Your Breastfeeding Baby and Plugged Ducts & Mastitis](https://www.lactationeducationresource.com/handouts/Weaning%20Your%20Breastfeeding%20Baby%20and%20Plugged%20Ducts%20&%20Mastitis). Kellymom.com article: How to Wean, January 14, 2018.

*Thank you for trusting us with you care...Tripler Army Medical Center  
Lactation Services 808-433-3732*