

Engorgement

What is Engorgement?

Around three days after giving birth, a hormonal change causes your milk supply to increase. This rapid filling is called engorgement and it can make your breasts feel uncomfortably full.

In addition to milk, your breasts may be swollen and inflamed. Engorgement is normal and usually only lasts for 24-48 hours.



What are the Signs and Symptoms?

- Your breasts will feel full, heavy, hard and warm to the touch.
- Breasts might tingle, itch or leak.
- You might have a low fever of 99-100 F.
- Your nipples may flatten out due to the swelling. This can make latching more difficult.

What Might Help?

To Reduce Swelling:

- Breastfeed your baby on demand to keep your milk flowing. Most newborns eat 10-12 times every 24 hours.
- Apply cold compresses or washed chilled cabbage leaves between feedings for comfort and to reduce inflammation.
- Talk to your doctor about taking ibuprofen.

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What Might Help?

To Help your Baby Latch

- **Try reverse pressure softening:**
 - Place your fingers and thumb on your areola, making a close circle around your nipple.
 - Firmly but gently push inward on the breast toward your ribs.
 - Hold this pressure for 1 - 3 minutes.
 - Release your fingers and quickly latch your baby to your now-extended nipple.
- **If reverse pressure softening doesn't work, try hand expression:**
 - Place your fingers and thumb about two inches behind the nipple.
 - Gently press your fingers and thumb back toward your ribs.
 - Press your fingers and thumb together.
 - Relax your hand.
 - Repeat until you see milk begin to flow and your areola softens enough to latch your baby.

Find more tips at [BreastmilkCounts.com](https://www.BreastmilkCounts.com)

**For free 24/7 information and support, call the
Texas Lactation Support Hotline at 1-855-550-6667
to speak with a lactation consultant.**

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