



Additional Resources



Sands Australia- Miscarriage, stillbirth
and newborn death support

www.sands.org.au

Sands UK- Stillbirth & neonatal death
charity

www.sands.org.uk

Share- Pregnancy and Infant Loss
Support-

www.nationalshare.org

Empty Arms- Bereavement support

www.emptyarmsbereavement.org

General Lactation Support:

La Leche League International

www.llli.org



Milk Bank

Address



Bereavement and Breast Milk

Support for grieving mothers



Milk Bank

Address

“Expressing and donating were healing to me in so many ways as I navigated the early months of grief. Having her milk to express kept her alive in me in a way. [...] It allowed me to come to terms with her death while protecting me from the potential hormonal crash that can come with early weaning” –Bereaved mother who donated breast milk



We are deeply sorry for your loss. We acknowledge your feelings and we understand that there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Why am I still producing milk after the loss of my baby?

Your body naturally starts the process of making milk at the 16th week of pregnancy. From this point onwards, it is normal for you milk to come in, regardless of birth outcome.

It is common for milk volumes to become abundant 2-5 days after delivery, which may lead to breast engorgement. Your breasts will feel full and may leak milk. Everyone experiences this process differently. Breast engorgement may also include: feeling sick, having a slight fever, and developing firm and painful breasts.

Your body does not know that you lost your baby and will continue to produce milk. Continued milk production after the loss of your baby can give rise to many emotions.

You have options:

- Some mothers wish to suppress their lactation as quickly and painlessly as possible. To do this, you may wish to express gradually less and less until your milk production stops.
- Some mothers wish to express their milk for a particular period (days, weeks, or longer) and then suppress their lactation.
- If you do nothing, you will eventually stop making milk, but your breasts may become engorged causing some pain and discomfort.

I want to suppress my milk

If your milk is just beginning to come in, you may notice some discomfort and feelings of engorgement. Your milk will dry up naturally if you choose not to express it. It may be more comfortable for you to allow this to happen gradually, especially if you have already begun pumping your milk.

It is helpful to express a little bit of milk by hand or with a pump to relieve engorgement and prevent blocked ducts. Expressing a small amount of milk will not tell your body to produce more.

Hot showers can cause your breasts to release a small amount of milk and may make you more comfortable. Crushed cabbage leaves or cold compresses placed in a supportive bra can help relieve swelling and discomfort.

Binding your breasts or wearing tight clothing over your breasts is not recommended. This can cause pain, inflammation of your breasts, and blocked milk ducts leading to a possible breast condition called mastitis.

Your body is adjusting just like you are, so be patient and know that you are not alone.

I want to express my milk

It can be comforting for some mothers to express milk for a period of time.

Expressing milk can be done by hand or with the help of a pump. Regular expression of milk, around eight times a day, will build up your milk supply.

If you already have a milk supply, you can continue expressing as much or as little as you desire and is comfortable for you. You can choose the right time to stop expressing milk.

You may choose what to do with the milk you express. Donating your milk to a non-profit milk bank is one option.

If you have any questions about expressing, storing, or donating your milk ask your healthcare provider, lactation consultant, or call the Milk Bank.

Contacts:

What if I want to donate my milk?

Your precious milk could help save a life. Milk donated to a Milk Bank is used to feed very sick and premature infants whose mothers cannot provide their own milk.

If you have stored milk already or want to begin or continue expressing milk, you may be able to donate this milk to a non-profit milk bank. If you choose to express and donate your milk, please contact the Milk Bank as soon as is convenient.

Your Milk Bank will provide you the information and resources to help ensure you are hygienically expressing milk that is suitable for donation.

Any amount of breast milk makes a difference, and even if you do not complete the screening process, your milk can often be used for research.

If you choose to donate your stored milk, for more information. They will guide you through the screening process:

- Complete a screening
- An information packet
- Have a blood test done



Once approved, you can drop off or deliver your milk.