

NEW MOTHER FACT SHEET



Breast Care For the Non-breastfeeding Mother



What Can I Expect?

- At the time of birth, changes occur in a woman's body associated with lactation regardless of the mother's intention to breastfeed.
- Before your milk comes in, your breasts should feel soft. Colostrum is the "early milk" present in your breasts for the first few days after childbirth.
- When your milk comes in (a few days after childbirth), your breasts may be swollen, firm, tender and warm.
- Engorgement is when your breasts become too full with milk. Engorgement is temporary and goes away on its own along with breast tenderness in 24 to 36 hours.

When To Call Your Health-Care Provider

- If you are experiencing pain that is not relieved by some of the methods described in the next column.
- You have symptoms of a breast infection known as mastitis. Symptoms include:
 - ✓ Fever higher than 100.4 degrees (by mouth).
 - ✓ Increased fatigue.
 - ✓ Muscle aches and flu-like symptoms.
 - ✓ Red, hot or hard breast.
 - ✓ Painful lump(s) in the breast.
 - ✓ Red streaks extending from a lump toward the underarm area.

What Can I Do?

If you choose not to or cannot breastfeed your baby, follow these guidelines:

- Wear a well-fitting, supportive, but non-constricting bra for at least three or four days following delivery.
- Refrain from stimulating the breasts or nipples.
- Do not pump breast milk or permit the newborn to suckle, as this will cause the breasts to make more milk.
- Apply cold compresses in the form of a frozen wet towel, cold packs, ice packs, or bags of frozen vegetables on the breasts for 15 minutes for a time every hour as needed.
- To prevent tissue injury, do not apply cold directly to bare skin. Place a light towel between the cold compress and your breast.
- Apply raw green cabbage leaves to the breasts under the bra and change when wilted or after two hours.
- Take acetaminophen or ibuprofen as directed to help relieve the pain and discomfort.
- Do not massage or apply heat to the breast.
- Rest and good nutrition will help you heal after childbirth. Drink plenty of fluids unless directed otherwise by your health-care provider.

