



HOME MANAGEMENT FOR BREAST ENGORGEMENT AMONG POSTNATAL MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT

Breast engorgement is when the breasts become overly full with milk after childbirth. It can cause discomfort, pain, and swelling. It typically occurs a few days after giving birth when milk production increases. Breast engorgement can make breastfeeding challenging, but there are ways to manage it. Breast engorgement happens when the breasts get really full and painful because of too much milk. It's common after giving birth. Some reasons for engorgement are not breastfeeding or pumping enough, not latching properly, or sudden changes in breastfeeding patterns.

To manage engorgement, try breastfeeding or pumping milk more often to empty the breasts. Using warm compresses before feeding can help with milk flow, and cold compresses afterward can reduce swelling. Massaging the breasts gently and wearing a supportive bra can also provide relief.

Key Words: breast engorgement, postnatal mothers, care.

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INTRODUCTION

Being a postnatal mother is a beautiful journey filled with joy, love, and new beginnings. It's a time of bonding with the little one, navigating the ups and downs of motherhood, and cherishing precious moments together. It's important to take care of oneself, both physically and emotionally, as mother navigate this new chapter in the life. It for support from the loved ones and healthcare professionals, as they can provide guidance and assistance along the way.

Postnatal mothers can face various challenges during this time. Some common problems include fatigue, sleep deprivation, hormonal changes, breastfeeding difficulties, postpartum depression, and adjusting to the demands of caring for a newborn. It's important for postnatal mothers to prioritize self-care, seek support from loved ones, and communicate openly with healthcare professionals to address any concerns or challenges they may be facing. Motherhood is a very humanizing effect. Mother is placed at the level of god to provide love, warmth and safety needs of baby. It is usually a joyful event, when a woman gives birth to a baby. Despite pain and discomfort, the first 6 weeks following birth have been referred to as 'puerperium or postnatal period.

During this puerperal period breastfeeding is one of the practices that have been associated with tremendous positive health outcomes for the baby and mother. Though breast feeding is a puerperal practice by the postnatal mothers, it is not successful for all the mothers due to many factors. One of the most common factors affecting this breast feeding practice is breast engorgement and it is the most often stated reason for cessation of breast feeding in the first 2 weeks of postpartum.

Breast engorgement may occur due to excessive production of milk, obstruction to outflow of milk or poor removal of milk by the baby. It usually manifests after the milk secretion starts.

Breast feeding is the most enriching experience for every mother; it plants the seeds of mother-child bonding. It is the most natural and, unique experience for every mother. It is a cherished and a learned art. Breast milk the "Cinderella substance of the decade" is nature's most precious gift to the newborn, and equivalent of which is yet to be innovated by our scientific community despite tremendous advances in science and technology. Just as there is no substitute for mother's love, there is no substitute for mother's milk. In an updated review on common problems during lactation and their management, it was found that breast engorgement is one among the several common problems that may arise during the breast feeding period and adequate management is fundamental, if not treated will lead to early weaning.⁵

In Ayurveda, there are a few remedies that may help with breast engorgement. One common practice is to apply warm herbal oils, such as sesame or castor oil, to the breasts and gently massage them to promote circulation and relieve congestion. Another approach is to use herbal poultices or compresses made from herbs like neem, turmeric, or fenugreek, which are believed to have anti-inflammatory properties. The physical act of breast feeding has multiple benefits for the mother and infant. The mother and infant bond is strengthened through breastfeeding. Infrequent feeding or ineffective emptying of the breasts, results in congestion and over distension of the collecting ductal system and obstruction of lymphatic drainage causing breast engorgement⁶. Engorgement is associated with maternal discomfort, difficulty with latch on and premature termination of breast feeding. Several studies cite engorgement of 5 breast or nipple pain as primary reason for the cessation of breast feeding. Mothers may describe their breast as feeling warm, full and heavy. Some have said they 'woke up with something heavy in the chest.

Breast engorgement can be a common issue for postnatal mothers. It occurs when the breasts become overly full with milk, causing discomfort and pain.

To manage breast engorgement at home, here are a few tips:

1. Frequent breastfeeding or expressing milk: Regularly emptying the breasts can help relieve engorgement. Try to breastfeed the baby frequently, ensuring they are latching properly. If needed, you can also use a breast pump to express milk.
2. Warm compresses: Applying a warm compress to the breasts before breastfeeding or expressing milk can help stimulate milk flow and relieve discomfort. You can use a warm towel or take a warm shower.
3. Cold compresses: After breastfeeding or expressing milk, applying a cold compress or ice pack to the breasts can help reduce swelling and pain. Just make sure to wrap the cold pack in a cloth before applying it.
4. Gentle breast massage: Massaging the breasts in a circular motion can help improve milk flow and relieve engorgement. You can do this before or during breastfeeding or expressing milk.



5. Wearing a supportive bra: Opt for a well-fitting, supportive bra that doesn't restrict milk flow. Avoid underwire bras that can compress the breasts.

There are a few reasons why breast engorgement can occur. It could be due to an imbalance between milk supply and demand, inadequate breastfeeding or pumping, infrequent feeding sessions, or difficulties with latching. Engorgement can also be a result of weaning or abrupt changes in breastfeeding patterns.

CONCLUSION

Home management is important for breast engorgement because it can help alleviate discomfort and promote milk flow. Some home remedies include applying warm compresses or taking warm showers to encourage milk letdown, gently massaging the breasts to relieve congestion, ensuring proper breastfeeding technique and frequent nursing or pumping sessions to empty the breasts, and using cold compresses or cabbage leaves to reduce swelling.

In addition to these tips, it's important to take care of oneself during this time. Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, and eat well. Taking care of the body is essential, especially during times of breastfeeding. It's important to prioritize self-care to ensure the overall well-being.