

Drying up your breasts (weaning)

If you stop removing milk from your breasts too fast, you can get clogged ducts, engorgement or a breast infection called mastitis. For this reason, you need to stop breastfeeding or pumping gradually to dry up your breasts.

When you take milk out of your breasts, it tells your body to make more milk. If you want to stop your body from making milk:

- It is best to lessen your milk removal or not empty your breasts.
- Avoid nipple stimulation.

What can I do to help “dry up” my breasts?

- Express just enough milk to keep your breasts comfortable.
 - Never let yourself get so full that your breasts hurt.
 - You can use your hands to express some milk while you take a shower.
- Do not bind your breasts, but do wear a supportive bra.
- Do not put heat on your breasts if they are swollen or engorged.
- Use cold packs to help soften breasts and lessen discomfort.
- With your doctor’s advice, take an anti-inflammatory medicine, such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or less costly store brand), to help relieve pain.
- Talk with your doctor about other medicines that can help stop milk production.
- It has been found that cold raw cabbage leaves on the breasts inside the bra help with breast pain and breast hardness.
 - Change the leaves every few hours.
 - Use them as long as needed.
- Drinking sage tea has been used to slow milk production. Monitor milk supply every 8 to 12 hours before drinking it again.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor if you have any of these flu-like symptoms that may be due to mastitis:

- Fever (temperature of 100.4°F or higher)
- Chills
- Aches
- Weakness
- Breast pain, redness or warmth while weaning.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.