

8 NEWBORN FEEDING

8.1 BREASTFEEDING

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8.4 Suppression of lactation
Section B
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8.4 SUPPRESSION OF LACTATION

AIM

- To suppress lactation in those mothers who wish to formula feed and those who have experienced a stillbirth or neonatal death.
- To minimise the discomfort experienced by women suppressing lactation.

MILK SUPPRESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING BIRTH¹

1. The breasts should be supported immediately post partum. A firm (but not tight) bra or crop top may be worn both day and night.
2. Advise the patient to avoid stimulating her breasts, but if the breasts become very full and painful she may need to express a little milk occasionally, for comfort.
3. If lactation is already established it is best to reduce breast milk production over a week or longer if possible.
4. Even when a baby has died, or weaning has to be immediate, many mothers find a gradual reduction in milk production by expressing to drain the breasts a couple of times a day for a few days is less painful than sudden cessation.¹
5. Application of cold compresses can alleviate painful breasts.
6. Mild analgesics, e.g. paracetamol, can also alleviate painful breasts.
7. Observe breasts for signs of inflammation.
8. Inform the patient that milk leakage may occur and breast pads may be required.
9. Avoid suddenly ceasing breastfeeding or expressing if mastitis is present.
10. Advise the patient the process of lactation varies but generally if lactation is not established discomfort only lasts 24 - 72 hours.
11. Women who have had a stillbirth or neonatal death may be prescribed Cabergoline.

SUPPRESSION OF LACTATION WHEN LACTATION IS ESTABLISHED AND MASTITIS IS PRESENT

- Advise the woman that this is not a good time to wean.
- Gradual reduction in milk production by expressing to drain the breasts is preferable to sudden cessation.
- Antibiotic cover for at least 10-14 days or longer is necessary if there continues to be lumpy or painful areas in the breasts.
- Gradually increase the length of time between expressions as the condition improves. When only expressing once a day, then cease.

REFERENCE:

1. Brodribb W. Lactation Suppression. **Breastfeeding management in Australia**. Third ed. Riverwood, NSW: Ligare Pty Ltd; 2004. p. 219-24.