

## ***For Breastfeeding Mothers ..... whose babies have died***

This sheet was designed as a guideline to help you care for yourself at this extremely difficult time.

As a mother who has been pumping and providing breast milk for your child, we would like to make the following suggestions to help you remain as comfortable as possible while gradually reducing milk production until it stops. Please know that if you have any questions or concerns you may contact a breastfeeding support nurse by calling 416-813-5757 or internally Ext. 205757 (press Opt. 2 to leave a message for the Lactation Consultant on duty that day to call mom or visit the unit the family is on) or you can call your family doctor or a lactation consultant in your area.

- ◆ **If you are interested, the Rogers Hixon Ontario Human Milk Bank is available for your previously-pumped milk and if you want to continue to pump milk for other babies in need. Please go to: [www.milkbankontario.ca](http://www.milkbankontario.ca) for more information.**
- ◆ We recommend that you wear a firm and supportive bra with absorbent (cotton) pads placed in the cups. Your breasts will likely fill with milk, and will leak, even if you did not provide breast milk for your baby. Some women find boiled cabbage leaves on the breasts help but the evidence is not confirmed.
- ◆ It is helpful to reduce the amount of fluid intake but try to eat nutritious foods even though you may experience changes in appetite.
- ◆ Pump off only enough milk to make your breasts comfortable. The aim is to take away the hard, tender feeling you may be experiencing. Aim to increase the amount of time between each pumping. For example if you were pumping every 3 hours, increase that the first day to every 4 hours. Try to continue to reduce the number of times you pump by one per day.
- ◆ Pumping will not increase the amount of milk production as long as you are not draining the breast completely. Reduce the length of time you are pumping each time to decrease production.
- ◆ Pump as often as you feel you are very full. This will be different with every individual and can be affected by factors such as stress or previous amount of milk production.
- ◆ The length of time it will take for your milk to stop is also very individual. If you are concerned that it is not slowing down please contact the clinic or your family doctor. On average, the process could take from 10 - 14 days.
- ◆ Gently massaging your breasts when they are painful is also very effective. Often a massage in a warm shower will provide relief.
- ◆ Intermittent ice packs to your breasts can reduce your discomfort, too.
- ◆ We do not recommend binding your breasts (applying a tight wrap around your chest), nor drug therapy that 'dries up the milk' as it can have uncomfortable 'flu-like' side effects. Pain relief medications like Acetaminophen can be used according to the instructions for breast soreness
- ◆ If you experience any reddened, sore or warm areas, lumps or dark discolorations on your breasts contact your doctor as this may indicate an infection.

Information validated by a journal article: Busta Moore, D. & Catlin, (2003) A. Lactation suppression: forgotten aspect of care for the mother of a dying child. *Pediatric Nursing*. 29(5): 383-384.

*Compiled with the assistance of D. Stone (Lactation Consultant) and SickKids Neonatology Palliative Care and Bereavement Program,*

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