



# Lactation at Loss

We are deeply sorry for your loss. We know this is a very difficult time and we hope to help you understand the different lactation options that you have.

## Why is there milk?

At the time of delivery, hormones are released that tell your body to make milk. Breastmilk usually comes in 3-7 days after delivery. Your breasts will begin to feel fuller and may leak milk. You may feel hot or have hot flashes. When your body begins to produce milk, you can decide if you want to pump your breasts, or to begin taking steps to dry your milk. Pumping your breasts will tell your body to continue to make more milk. Taking steps to dry your milk or “suppressing” your milk will tell your body to stop making milk.

## Stopping your milk

Suppressing means “to stop” your milk supply. If you do not pump your breasts, your body will stop the milk supply and your milk will slowly dry up. This can take 3-7 days for your milk to stop. You may feel some discomfort in your breasts during this time.

Here are some suggestions that may help to make your breasts more comfortable during this time:

- Use a nursing pad inside your bra to absorb leaking milk
- Wear a bra that supports your breasts. Make sure your bra is not too tight or too loose
- Use cabbage leaves to help with swelling and discomfort. You may use refrigerate or room temperature leaves. The green outer leaves work best. “Cup,” or place, the cabbage leaves over each breast. Make a small hole in the leaf for your nipple. Put the leaves directly on your breasts and put on your bra to hold the leaves in place. When the leaves wilt (become limp) remove them and replace with a fresh, cool leaf. Using cabbage leaves in the daytime may help you to be more comfortable and sleep better at night.
- Cool compresses can be used to help with breast swelling and minor discomfort.

## Pumping and donating milk

You may choose to pump your breasts as long as your body continues to make milk. Pumped milk may be donated in honor of your baby. If you pumped and stored your milk, you may be able to donate your milk to help feed babies. Donating your breast milk to a milk bank is a generous and kind act.

Pumping milk can be done with the help of an electric pump. Pumping your breasts early will help you have a good milk supply. If you want to pump and donate your milk, we can help you start pumping shortly after delivery. Pumping up to 8 times per day will give you the best milk results. However, some mothers choose to pump when they need to in order to stay comfortable.

### There are two local options for milk donation:

**The Mother Milk Bank at WakeMed:** If you are interested in donating your milk you may contact the bank at 919-350-8599, or by email at [mothersmilkbank@wakemed.org](mailto:mothersmilkbank@wakemed.org). They will guide you on how to donate to the bank. **You must be approved before donating and not all mothers' milk is eligible for donation.** All costs for milk donation are usually paid for by the milk bank. Once you are approved, you are ready to drop off or ship your milk to the milk bank. A staff member from The Mother Milk Bank will help you with this process.

**Wake Forest Baptist Health Brenner Children's Hospital:** The children's hospital also accepts breast milk donations. Prolacta Bioscience manages the milk donation for the hospital. Through this program, you may select a milk bank that best meets your needs. **You must be approved before donating and not all mothers' milk is eligible for donation.** All costs for donation are usually paid for by the milk bank. Once you are approved, you are ready to drop off or ship your milk to the milk bank. A staff member from Brenner Children's Hospital will help you with this process.