

Review on Breast Engorgement and its Management

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ABSTRACT

Breast engorgement is a common postnatal complication that can occur after 48 to 74 hours of postnatal period. Sign and Symptoms are soreness, swelling, tenderness and redness in breast area. Breast engorgement can diagnose by breast examination, breast engorgement scale and visual analogue scale. Management for breast engorgement is massage over the breast, breast milk removal by breast pump, exclusive breast feeding, cabbage leave application and pain killer medication. In current situation Covid-19 symptoms are also affect the mother during postnatal or breast complications.

KEYWORDS: Breast engorgement, Postnatal mothers, home management

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INTRODUCTION

Breast engorgement occurs in the mammary glands due to expansion and pressure exerted by the synthesis and storage of breast milk. It is also a main factor in altering the ability of the infant to latch-on. Engorgement changes the shape and curvature of the nipple region by making the breast inflexible, flat, hard, and swollen.

Because of covid-19, some women feel that after delivery they are having risk for corona. because of breast engorgement or mastitis or living in hospital, women suffer from chest tightness, chest pain, tenderness of breast, fever and chills. so some women confused between breast complication and covid -19 symptoms.

So if you are a nurse you can clear the women confusion about covid-19 and breast engorgement.

Breast engorgement means that your breasts are painfully full of milk. This usually happens when a mother produces more milk than her baby uses. The mother's breast may become tight and swollen, making it difficult for your baby to breastfeed. Engorged breasts can be treated at home.

Breast engorgement is breast tenderness that leads to painful, tender breasts. It is caused by an increase in the blood flow and milk supply in your breasts and occurs in the first few days after you have born the baby.

INCIDENT RATE-

The incidence rate of breast engorgement all over the world is 1:8000, and in India, it is 1:6500. Engorgement symptoms occur most commonly between days 3 and 5, with more than two-thirds of women with tenderness on day 5 but some as

late as days 9-10. and subsides within 12-48 hours if properly treated (7-10 days without proper treatment)

COMMON SYMPTOMS-

Symptoms of engorged breasts include:

1. Edema, tenderness with painful breasts. If the breasts are severely engorged, they are very swollen, tough, shiny, warm, and slightly lumpy to the touch.
2. Flattened nipples. The dark area circle the nipple, the areola, may be very firm. This makes discomfort to baby during latching.
3. Fever 100.4°F (38°C).
4. Tender lymph nodes in armpits.



Diagnosis of breast engorgement-

Breast engorgement is diagnosed based on symptoms alone. No exams or tests are needed.

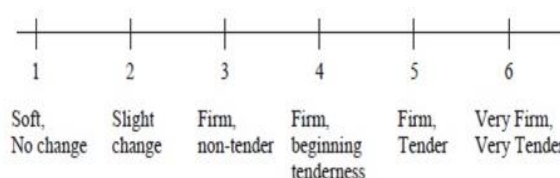


Figure 1: Six point self rated engorgement scale

Breast engorgement scale-

Engorgement is assessed using 6-Point Self Rated Engorgement Scale from 1 to 6 (Figure 1)

Pain was assessed subjectively by using the visual analogue scale, a subjective measure of self-rated pain on a numerical scale of 1-10 (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Visual analogue scale.

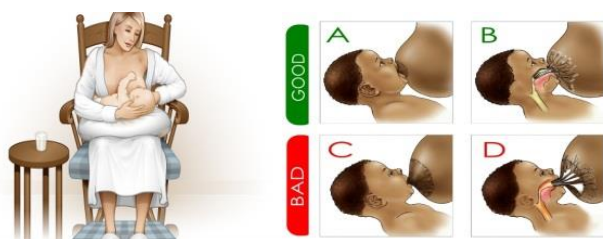
Management-

A management treatment can be implemented and evaluated with a midwifery or healthcare professional. The key to treating breast engorgement is promoting the frequent and effective removal of milk from the breast or breast pump. In conjunction with a healthcare professional's advice, strategies that may be implemented include:

- Frequent and effective breastfeeding or pumping starting within the first hour after delivery. Mother should breastfeed at least 8-12 times a day, with no more than three hours between breastfeeds.
- If breastfeeding is not possible, frequent expression with a pumping is recommended 8-12 times a day.



- Warming the breast with warming packs before feed the baby may help initiate flow of milk.
- Cooling the engorged breast with cold packs or chilled cabbage leaves may help relieve pain.
- Prior to attaching the baby to the breast, the reverse pressure softening technique can be applied. This technique uses gentle positive pressure/massage to soften the areola region, aiming to temporarily move some swelling slightly backwards and upwards into the breast to improve the latch of the baby during engorgement
- In the case of tender spots in the breast, mums may be able to position the baby during breastfeeding so that the baby's chin is pointing towards the tender spot.



- Following consultation with a medical professional, pain reliever with an anti-inflammatory agent may be recommended to help with the milk pass.

- If symptoms do not disappear within 24-48 hours, or if influenza like symptoms develop, the mother should consult a doctor, as engorgement can lead to mastitis.
- It has been reported that Other techniques such as thermal ultrasound breast treatments and massage provide pain relief in some cases

If mother is not breastfeeding, use one or more of these steps to relieve discomfort:

- Do not pump or withdraw a lot of milk from your breasts. If your breasts with sore, you can pull them out a bit to be more comfortable.
- Apply a cold compress to your breasts for 15 minutes at a time every hour as needed. To avoid damaging your skin, place a thin cloth between your breast and the cold compress.
- Take ibuprofen in addition to using non-medicine treatments. Be safe with ibuprofen. before using drug read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Wear a tight brassiere that fits well and provides good support.

Prevention of breast engorgement

Breast engorgement can be prevented by controlling the breast milk production and by keeping out from breast. During your body's first week or two of adjusting to breastfeeding, be careful not to leave your breasts full.

- Feed your baby whenever he shows signs of hunger. If the mother's breast is hard and too full, let it out (pull out) enough to soften the nipples before putting your baby to the breast.
- Make sure that your baby is latching in right manner and feeding well.
- Empty your breasts each time you feed. This will help your milk move around freely and keep your milk supply at the level your baby needs.
- For the prevention of covid-19 clean your hand and breast before feed it will help to reduce the chances of spread of covid-19.
- Wear a proper mask during each feed to protect her child from covid-19.

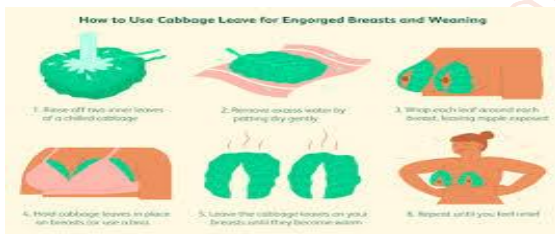
**Home remedies for breast engorgement-**

- 1. Gently massage:** massage the breasts from the chest towards the nipple with small gentle movements. If your breasts do not hurt, gently massage your breasts in circular motions. The massage improves circulation and allows the accumulated milk to flow better through the nipple.
- 2. Express milk:** Express milk about 8-10 times in a day using a breast pump or hand. Collect the expressed milk in a sterilized bottle and feed it to your baby. Speak to your physician or visit a lactation consultant to learn the correct way of express and store the breast milk.
- 3. Ice packs and warm bath:** Place an ice pack in breast for 15-20 minutes at the point of engorgement to feel

relax. Take a warm shower to improve milk flow and reduce breast firmness.



4. **Increase feeds as needed:** Most newborns need 8-12 feeds per day. If the number of feeds is less than normal for some reason, try increase it slowly.
5. **Cabbage leaves may help:** There are several anecdotal stories of mothers finding relief from a cooled cabbage leaf placed inside the bra. Clean the cabbage leaf before placing it in the refrigerator to cool it down. Place it in the bra cup of the affected breast and leave it until it becomes hot or wilt. There is some evidence that kale leaves can help relieve breast engorgement. Experts say it is a harmless home remedy and worth a try.



CONCLUSION-

Breast engorgement occurs either when many feedings begin or are absent without expressing milk or during

pregnancy. It also happens in the transition period when the breasts switch from colostrum to mature milk. This condition is characterized by swollen, warm breasts that feel hard and inflexible. Mild cases of chest constipation report tingling, edema, and heat, while extreme cases report pain with considerable discomfort and a throbbing sensation in the chest, armpit, and hands, and a slight fever. It can cause mastitis, breast abscess if not treated in time. In this pandemic condition all these symptoms will also explain to mother after discharge from hospital because some mother having confusion about mastitis and covid-19 symptoms.

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