### Professional tips for relieving engorgement

Here’s how to manage engorgement while you’re initiating and establishing breastfeeding:

- Use thermo pads inside your bra for up to 30 minutes after feeds
- Gently massage your breasts to stimulate milk flow
- Express milk by hand or with a pump if you miss a feed and need to be away from your baby
- Protect your nipples with nipple cream and use nipple protectors during a feed
- Apply slight, constant pressure to to relieve breasts by wearing breast shells

Ask for help

Know that a little discomfort when breastfeeding is normal, but any strong or ongoing discomfort, and signs of fever should be addressed immediately. The best person to reach out to is your healthcare professional.

### Behind the scenes

Here’s a closer look at what you can expect from engorgement during breastfeeding.

**What does it feel like?**

Most women experience engorgement as a feeling of over fullness. Your breasts might also feel hard, heavy, swollen or lumpy.

**How long does it last?**

Every woman experiences engorgement a little differently. Some have mild engorgement for just a day, while others experience it for up to two weeks.

You might also experience engorgement down the track. For example, if you’re weaning your baby and there’s a mismatch between your milk supply and the amount of milk your baby is drinking.

**Is the pain really normal?**

A little discomfort when breastfeeding is normal, but any strong or ongoing discomfort, or signs of fever, should be addressed immediately. The best person to contact is your healthcare professional.

**Professional tips for prevention**

Although engorgement is generally normal, you can take small steps to ensure you’re still able to breastfeed comfortably.

1. **Get a breast check**
   - Get a breast check before your baby arrives so you’ll know of any adjustments you may need to make in order to feed comfortably.

2. **Breastfeed immediately after birth**
   - Make the most of the “golden hour” after birth by breastfeeding immediately. This gives your baby a chance to latch properly before your milk comes in.

3. **Feed your baby frequently**
   - Breastfeed at least 8 times in 24 hours to prevent over fullness when your milk comes in. And empty each breast before offering the next.

4. **Ensure a good latch**
   - Ask for help from a healthcare professional if your baby isn’t latching properly onto your breast.