



# SECOND NATURE LACTATION

KARISSA BINKLEY, IBCLC

## RESOLVING ENGORGEMENT

**MEDICAL WARNINGS:** BREAST ENGORGEMENT CAN ALSO BE ASSOCIATED WITH GENERALIZED SWELLING OR EDEMA. IF YOU HAVE HAD ANY HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER DELIVERY, IF YOU HAVE NEW OR UNRESOLVED SWELLING IN YOUR HANDS, FEET OR BREASTS, ANY DIZZINESS, TROUBLE BREATHING, VISION CHANGES, UPPER ABDOMINAL PAIN, DECREASED URINATION, HEADACHES, OR JUST DON'T FEEL "RIGHT", GO IMMEDIATELY TO YOUR OB OR THE ER TO RULE OUT ANY POSTPARTUM HYPERTENSION. DON'T FEEL SILLY OR THAT YOU ARE OVER-REACTING. POSTPARTUM PRE-ECLAMPSIA IS VERY DANGEROUS.

IF YOU HAVE FEVER, CHILLS AND ACHES LIKE THE FLU, OR ANY VERY LARGE, PAINFUL RED AREA, YOU MAY HAVE A BREAST INFECTION CALLED MASTITIS. PLEASE CALL YOUR OB OR MIDWIFE TO GET STARTED ON ANTIBIOTICS. YOU SHOULD NOT DISCONTINUE BREASTFEEDING AND THERE IS NO NEED TO PUMP & DUMP. YOUR DOCTOR WILL NOT PUT YOU ON AN ANTIBIOTIC THAT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH BREASTFEEDING. IF YOU ARE UNSURE, PLEASE CALL ME AND I WILL LOOK INTO THE SAFETY OF THE MEDICATION.

IF YOU HAVE A RED AREA THAT LOOKS UNUSUAL, IS AN OPEN WOUND, OR THE TENDERNESS AND HARDNESS STARTS TO TAKE OVER A LARGE AREA OF YOUR BREAST AND IS NOT RESOLVING, PLEASE GO TO YOUR OB. IT MAY BE AN ABSCESS THAT WILL NEED TO GET DRAINED.

**EXPLANATION:** WHEN YOU ARE ENGORGED OR HAVE MASTITIS, SEVERAL THINGS ARE TAKING PLACE: YOUR BODY IS PRODUCING MILK FASTER THAN IT IS GETTING REMOVED AND YOUR BREASTS ARE BECOMING INFLAMED. THIS CAUSES YOUR BODY PRODUCED LYMPHATIC FLUID (LIKE WHEN YOU SPRAIN YOUR ANKLE). THE SWELLING THEN CAUSES FURTHER CONGESTION MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR MILK TO FLOW AND THE SWELLING CAN BE PAINFUL BOTH GENERALLY AND IN THE NIPPLE AREA. THE SWELLING CAN ALSO MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE BABY TO LATCH. THINK OF IT LIKE A REALLY BAD TRAFFIC JAM. IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR MILK DUCTS ARE GETTING SQUISHED CAUSING MILK AND LYMPHATIC FLUID TO KEEP BACKING UP WITH NO WHERE TO GO.

## **INFLAMMATION REDUCTION (FOR ENGORGEMENT, MASTITIS AND WORSENING PLUGGED DUCTS):**

IN ORDER TO RESOLVE YOUR BREAST ENGORGEMENT, YOU NEED TO REDUCE THE SWELLING, INFLAMMATION AND CONGESTION AND GET YOUR BREASTS SOFTER AND LESS SWOLLEN. DO NOT WORRY THAT BY GETTING THE MILK OUT YOU WILL BE DRIVING UP YOUR SUPPLY. SOFTER, MORE COMFORTABLE BREASTS WILL ALLOW YOU TO MAKE JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF MILK FOR YOUR BABY. CONVERSELY KEEPING YOUR BREASTS FULL AND ENGORGED WILL SIGNAL TO YOUR BRAIN TO SLOW DOWN PRODUCTION TOO MUCH. NOT ONLY DOES ENGORGEMENT MAKE IT HARD TO PUMP OUT MILK, BUT AN ENGORGED BREAST CAN MAKE IT VERY CHALLENGING FOR A BABY TO LATCH. IT'S LIKE SUCKING ON THE OUTSIDE OF A MELON!

**PLAN:** HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS TO RESOLVE YOUR DISCOMFORT. THE FREQUENCY DEPENDS ON HOW WELL YOU ARE ABLE TO GET YOUR BREASTS FEELING MORE COMFORTABLE AND THE SEVERITY OF YOUR ENGORGEMENT:

**1. IF NOT ALLERGIC, AND OK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN, 400-600 MG. OF IBUPROFEN (ADVIL, MOTRIN, ETC.) CAN HELP WITH PAIN AND INFLAMMATION.** (TYLENOL IS NOT AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATION.) IT IS RECOMMENDED TO TAKE THE IBUPROFEN UNTIL THE ENGORGEMENT IS GONE, BUT THEN TO DISCONTINUE IT ONCE YOUR BREASTS ARE SOFTER TO ENSURE THAT IT IS NOT MASKING A FEVER WHICH MAY INDICATE MASTITIS.

**2. UNTIL RESOLVED START WITH ICE PACKS OR COLD COMPRESSES FOR 5-10 MINS EVERY HOUR.** THIS COULD BE A BAG OF FROZEN VEGETABLES, A SOAKED-WITH-WATER-AND-THEN-FROZEN DISPOSABLE DIAPER, OR ANY OTHER MALLEABLE FROZEN PACK.

**3. THEN BEING THE LYMPHATIC MANUAL BREAST PROTOCOL: PLEASE SEE VIDEO**

**ARM-PIT PUMP:** TAKE YOUR RIGHT HAND AND GENTLY SQUEEZE YOUR LEFT ARM PIT, PUMPING 10 TIMES, THEN DO THE SAME TO THE OTHER ARMPIT. THIS IS HELPING TO "WAKE UP" THE MANY LYMPH GLANDS LOCATED IN YOUR ARM-PIT.

**BREAST GYMNASTICS** PLACING YOUR HANDS AT THE BOTTOM CREASE OF YOUR BREASTS, GENTLY MOVE THEM UP, DOWN, LEFT RIGHT AND IN SMALL CIRCLES IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. THEN GENTLY PUSH BACK INTO YOUR CHEST WALL AND RELAX, REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES, AND THEN FINISH WITH SMALL GENTLE SHAKING WHILE LEANING FORWARD. THIS IS HELPING TO LOOSEN UP THE FASCIA, A LAYER OF CONNECTIVE TISSUE.

**BREAST MANUAL THERAPY (WATCH VIDEO).** THE PRESSURE OF THIS MANUAL THERAPY IS LIKE BRUSHING CRUMBS OFF A COUNTER OR STROKING YOUR BABY'S HEAD. IF YOUR PARTNER CAN DO THIS FOR YOU, IT IS MORE RELAXING AND YOU MAY HAVE BETTER RESULTS. LAY FLAT OR SLIGHTLY RECLINED BACK, USE A COLD WASHCLOTH OR COLD PACK ON THE BREAST YOU ARE NOT WORKING ON. USING COCONUT OIL OR OLIVE OIL, VERY GENTLY GLIDE OVER THE SKIN OF YOUR BREASTS WITH YOUR FINGER TIPS OR THE FLAT OF YOUR HAND IN SWEEPING BROAD STROKES AROUND YOUR BREAST UP TO THE ADJACENT ARMPIT (ALMOST LIKE TRACING THE UNDERWIRE OF YOUR BRA), SLIDE OVER COLLAR BONE AS WELL AND UNDER YOUR BREAST, MAKING SURE TO USE A LIGHT GLIDING TOUCH. ALL STROKES FINISH IN THE ARMPIT.

YOU MAY FIND THAT AFTER 10-15 MINUTES OF THIS LIGHT TOUCH, MILK WILL START TO LEAK OUT FROM YOUR NIPPLE, WHICH IS JUST WHAT YOU WANT.

**PUMPING:** IF THE BABY IS NOT ABLE TO LATCH WELL ENOUGH AFTER GETTING YOUR MILK FLOWING OR CAN ONLY SOFTEN ONE SIDE, PUMP ON A LOW SETTING SO THAT BOTH SIDES ARE COMFORTABLE. PUMPING ON A HIGH SETTING IS NOT ALWAYS THE BEST THING TO DO AT FIRST BECAUSE IT MAY RESULT IN PULLING TOO MUCH FLUID DOWN INTO YOUR NIPPLE AREA MAKING IT MORE CONGESTED. IF PUMPING IS WORKING AND YOU ARE GETTING MILK OUT, YOU CAN THEN SLOWLY INCREASE THE SUCTION, BUT NOT SO HIGH THAT YOUR NIPPLES HURT. YOU MIGHT ALSO FIND THAT PUMPING, THEN STOPPING FOR A SHORT BREAK, AND RETURNING TO PUMPING WILL HELP GET MORE MILK OUT.

## **OTHER IDEAS:**

**SHOWER OR BATH** WHILE COLD COMPRESSES ARE BETTER WHEN THERE IS ENGORGEMENT OR A BREAST INFECTION, MODERATE ENGORGEMENT MAY RESPOND WELL TO WARMTH. SHOWERING CAN BE SO RELAXING THAT YOU MIGHT FIND YOU CAN HAND EXPRESS RIGHT IN THE SHOWER (DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MILK GOING DOWN THE DRAIN. YOU WILL MAKE MORE!) AND THEN START BREASTFEEDING OR PUMPING AS SOON AS YOU OUT. TRY A BATH WITH EPSOM SALTS OR MAKE A SOAK WITH WARM WATER IN A BASIN OR COMPRESSES.

**CABBAGE LEAVES:** THE USE OF CABBAGE LEAVES FOR ENGORGEMENT AND REDUCING MILK PRODUCTION IS AN AGE-OLD REMEDY. NO ONE IS SURE WHETHER IT IS MERELY THE CONCENTRATED COLD OR IF THERE IS SOMETHING INTRINSIC TO THE CABBAGE ITSELF, BUT IT CAN WORK. BUY A HEAD OF GREEN CABBAGE. PLACE IT IN THE REFRIGERATOR. WHEN READY TO USE, PEEL OFF TWO LEAVES, KEEPING THEM INTACT, WASH WELL. SLIGHTLY POUND OUT THE THICK CENTRAL VEIN AND THEN PLACE THEM IN YOUR BRA. THIS IS A GREAT MOBILE COLD PACK TO USE JUST BEFORE DOING THE THERAPEUTIC BREAST MASSAGE.