Suppression of lactation may be required for the following reasons:

- The mother has chosen to formula feed
- The mother has a medical condition that precludes breastfeeding
- The mother has experienced a stillbirth or neonatal death
- The baby has a medical condition that precludes breastfeeding

**Milk suppression**

1. The breasts need to be supported with a firm, supportive (but not tight) bra or crop top, worn both day and night.
2. Advise the mother to avoid stimulating her breasts, however, if the breasts become full and painful express just enough milk for comfort only, the milk supply will gradually decrease.
3. Relieve discomfort and oedema by placing cold packs from the fridge on the breasts and/or taking analgesics/anti-inflammatory medication i.e. paracetamol or ibuprofen
4. If lactation is already established it may take longer to reduce the milk supply. It is best to reduce breast milk production over a week or longer if possible.
5. Observe breasts for lumps and inflammation.
6. Prescribed medication to suppress lactation works best in the early stages of lactation. Cabergoline may be prescribed for suppression of lactation.
7. Provide leaflet ‘Suppression of Lactation’ to mother prior to discharge
Avoid suppression of lactation when mastitis is present

- Advise the woman that this is not a good time to wean, as it increases the risk of breast abscess formation.
- Express until the mastitis resolves then the supply may be slowly reduced.
- Apply cold, take analgesic and/or anti-inflammatory medication for comfort as required.
- Appropriate antibiotic cover for at least 10-14 days is necessary.
- When the mastitis is resolved gradually increase the length of time between expressions and reduce the amount of milk expressed.

References and resources

Bibliography


Related WNHS policies, procedures and guidelines

Obstetrics and Gynaecology Clinical Guidelines:

- Breastfeeding Challenges: Mastitis and Breast Abscess Management
- HIV Positive- Management of a woman and her neonate
- Perinatal Loss

Pharmacy

- A-Z Adult Medication Monograph: Cabergoline
- Structured Administration and Supply Arrangements (SASA): Cabergoline SASA (available to WA Health employees through Healthpoint)
This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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