



## Breast care after baby loss

### Your choices and options

This leaflet is about your breast care choices. These include:

- Stopping your body producing milk
- Allowing lactation to start or continue
- Deciding what to do with any milk you produce

**If you are reading this leaflet after the loss of your baby, we are sorry for your loss and we hope that this leaflet helps you to make some decisions.**

### What is lactation?

- Lactation is the process of producing and releasing milk from the mammary glands in the breasts.
- A woman's body normally starts to make milk at around 16 weeks of pregnancy, although this can sometimes be earlier depending on your history.
- High hormone levels prevent full lactation until after the birth when hormone changes lead to full breast milk production.
- **Colostrum** is the first form of breastmilk that is released by the mammary glands. Colostrum changes to mature milk 3-5 days after the birth. Breastmilk is then produced in response to demand.
- Some parents find comfort in their body making milk when their baby dies as an ongoing connection with their baby.
- This leaflet details the options to help you make an informed choice that is right for you and your family. Try to remember there is no right or wrong decision in this situation.



## Available options for breast care

### What if I do not want to start or continue producing milk?

- We can offer you medication called Cabergoline which can help stop the body producing milk quickly. In most cases Cabergoline is effective in stopping your milk supply completely, but this may not be the case for some. This medication is also not suitable for all and occasionally there may be mild side-effects.

### What if I wanted to allow my milk to come in and stop naturally?

- It may take several weeks for your breasts to stop producing milk after your baby is born. It is important that when your breasts begin to fill with milk you try not to express unless you need to for comfort. When breasts are not emptied, they naturally stop producing milk over time.
- During this time there are some comfort measures you can take that include:
  - Wearing a soft, non-underwired supportive bra
  - Sleeping on your back
  - Using a cold compress on your breasts for 15-20 minutes which can provide pain relief and reduce swelling
  - Avoiding hot compresses
  - Taking an anti-inflammatory medication such as Ibuprofen (unless you are advised not to take this)

## Breast milk options

### What if I want to continue my milk supply?

- You may want to express and create a short- or long-term milk supply which may provide comfort for you at this difficult time. This can also have positive health benefits for you. However, grief is very complex and personal, and this may not be the choice of everyone.
- If you are interested in continuing your supply, further details can be found in the leaflet “**Breast Milk Donation After Baby Loss - Your Choices and Options**” which we can give you. Please ask one of the Bereavement Support Midwives for the leaflet.






## Whittington Maternity contact information

- **Whittington Bereavement Midwifery Team**  
Jane Laking, Debra Virchis, Katie Courtney  
Shared phone: 07825 009 071 (operational 8am-4pm, 7 days a week)  
Email: [whh-tr.bereavementmidwife@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.bereavementmidwife@nhs.net)
- **Early Pregnancy Unit** – 020 7288 3786 (If the pregnancy was below 18 weeks)
- **Maternity Triage** – 020 7288 5880 (If the pregnancy was 18 weeks or over)
- **Labour Ward** - 020 7288 5502
- **Fetal Medicine Unit** - 020 7288 5588
- **Department of Spiritual and Pastoral Care** - 020 7288 5337

## Support for you

There are many organisations that can offer help and support, and it is important that you find the right one for you. The Bereavement Support Midwives at the Whittington will discuss the support that is right for you following your discharge. Other organisations you may wish to contact are:

	Contact Number	Website
<b>ARC</b>	020 7713 7486	<a href="http://www.arc-uk.org">www.arc-uk.org</a>
<b>Chana</b>	020 8201 5774 020 8800 0018	<a href="http://www.chana.org.uk">www.chana.org.uk</a>
<b>Little Fingers</b>		<a href="http://www.littlefingers.org.uk">www.littlefingers.org.uk</a>
<b>MIND</b>	020 8519 2122	<a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a>
<b>Miscarriage Association</b>	01924 200 799	<a href="http://miscarriageassociation.org.uk">miscarriageassociation.org.uk</a>
<b>Muslim Bereavement Support Service</b>	020 3468 7333	<a href="http://www.mbss.org.uk">www.mbss.org.uk</a>
<b>Samaritans</b>	116 123	<a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>
<b>Saying Goodbye UK</b>	0845 293 8027	<a href="http://www.sayinggoodbye.org">www.sayinggoodbye.org</a>
<b>SANDS</b> (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society) Local North-East London group	020 7436 5881	<a href="http://www.sands.org.uk">www.sands.org.uk</a>  North and East London Sands  nelondonsands <a href="http://support.northeastlondon.org.uk">support.northeastlondon.org.uk</a>
<b>SANDS United</b> (Support for Fathers)		 SandsUtdLondon <a href="http://www.sands.org.uk/sands-united">www.sands.org.uk/sands-united</a>



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email [whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net). We will try our best to meet your needs.

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