How to Dry Up Your Breast Milk Supply

Breast milk production works on supply and demand. If you are not removing the breast milk, your body will quit producing milk in time. There may be a few days where your breasts are very full and even painful. Here is what you need to know.

First, wear a supportive bra. Your breasts will be fuller and you will need the extra support. You may also want to wear nursing pads to absorb any leakage.

Secondly, ibuprofen (brand names include Advil and Motrin) is an anti-inflammatory medication and can help reduce swelling. If your doctor ordered ibuprofen during your hospital stay, you may continue to take it as ordered or check with your doctor if you have questions.

To further reduce swelling, ice packs may be used. There should be at least a thin layer of cloth in between the ice pack and your skin. A package of frozen peas can make an excellent ice pack. Peas are much softer than ice cubes, with no sharp edges. The bag will drape over the breast to provide good coverage. Leave the ice pack on for about 15-20 minutes and then remove. Repeat every few ours as desired. You may use the bag of peas over and over as an ice pack, but they will no longer be edible.

Some moms will choose to remove some breast milk, to make themselves more comfortable. You would not want to pump until you are empty, just until comfortable. If you choose to remove milk, it will take longer for your breast milk to dry-up but the trade-off is that you will be more comfortable while it is happening. You may give your baby any milk that you remove, and it can be stored in the refrigerator for two days or your freezer for up to three months.

It is no longer recommended that you bind the breasts. Studies have reported no benefit in doing so, and that moms reported increased tenderness, and leaking. Binding of the breasts may also increase the risk of mastitis (a breast infection).

If you develop chills or a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees, contact your doctor. If you have questions, you may contact a lactation nurse at (214) 645-1545.
References:

Swift, K., Janke, J. Breast Binding…Is it All That It’s Wrapped Up To Be?. JOGNN (32) 3, pp 332-339
