An appointment has been arranged for you on: ........................................

At .................................................................

Further Information
If you are worried about your condition contact:
1. KHUH on ______________________

2. Your Primary Health Care Centre

www.khuh.org.bh
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Tel.: +97317444444, Fax: +97317444449
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Postpartum Breast Engorgement
What is Postpartum Engorgement?

After you have given birth to your baby, you will notice changes in your breasts, usually on the second to fifth day. They will become larger, somewhat firm, and slightly tender as they begin to produce large amounts of milk. This is called postpartum breast engorgement.

Engorgement is a normal process. However, breast swelling with engorgement may make it difficult for your baby to get milk because:

- Your baby may not latch correctly and your nipple may become sore.
- Not releasing your pressure on your breast can cause you to make less milk or not to stop producing milk.

Knowing how to manage engorgement will help you avoid these problems.

How long will it last?

Engorgement will only last a few days until your body gets used to making and releasing milk. The swelling of your breast makes it seem like you are making more milk than your baby needs. However, getting milk flow is really the problem with engorgement, rather than making too much milk.

Once your baby is nursing well and your milk is flowing easily, there will be less swelling and firmness. Within a few days, your breasts adjust to your baby’s appetite, and you will most likely produce as much as your baby requires.

By the end of the first week after delivery, your breasts will have adjusted and will be much less engorged.

How can I take care of myself?

Prevention:
Aim to feed your baby 8 to 12 times every 24 hours. Your newborn should nurse vigorously at least 10 minutes at each breast.

Managing fullness and discomfort:
Warm your breast just before nursing. Heat improves blood flow and helps the release of your milk. Thus, a warm shower or warm washcloth on your breasts just before feeding may help relieve engorgement. Here is how you can use cabbage leaves for engorgement:

1. Put thoroughly washed and dried, crisp, cold green cabbage leaves over your engorged breasts. You can wear the leaves inside your bra or use them as compress covered by a cool towel. You can cut holes in the leaves, if necessary, to allow the nipples to stay dry.

2. Leave the cabbage leaves in place for about 20-30 minutes or until they have wilted. Usually one or two applications of the leaves are needed to soften the breasts and establish good milk flow. Longer periods of time have been used by women who are trying to dry up their milk.

Milk flow during engorgement
You may want to pump or hand express some milk before feeding. Express enough to soften the nipple and areola so your baby can better grasp your breast.

If your breasts are still uncomfortably full after feeding your baby, pump for a few minutes until your breasts are softer and your milk is flowing better. Reduce the firmness enough to relieve discomfort and produce oblivious softening.

Encourage your baby to nurse frequently to relieve breast fullness. Soon your baby will empty your breasts well at each feeding and you will no longer need to pump excess milk.