

Breast Care After Pregnancy Loss

The goal of our education materials is to provide medically accurate information that is inclusive of all parents and families. We invite you to have a conversation with your provider about the vocabulary and language that is most comfortable for you.

What kind of breast symptoms might I have after pregnancy?

After your pregnancy ends, you may have breast soreness, breast pain, or breast tenderness. Sometimes, your breasts may produce milk, as if you were going to breastfeed.

Why might I have breast symptoms?

When your pregnancy ends, your body's **hormones** (chemicals naturally produced by the body) change. You have less of a hormone called dopamine, which causes your levels of a hormone called prolactin to rise. One of prolactin's effects is to tell your breasts to make milk. This can cause the breasts to produce milk, get larger, and become tender.

What can I do about these breast symptoms?

Sometimes these breast symptoms can be unwanted and uncomfortable. Some actions that may help are:

- Wearing tight-fitting clothes on your chest, like a tight sports bra or tank top
- Using cold compresses or ice packs on your breasts
- Taking ibuprofen (Motrin®) if you are not allergic
- Avoiding squeezing milk out or expressing milk from your nipples
- Avoiding touching your nipples

It may also help to take a medication called cabergoline (Dostinex®). This medication is only available with a doctor's prescription.

What is cabergoline (Dostinex®)?

Cabergoline (pronounced ka-BER-go-leen) is a dopamine agonist medication, meaning it helps your body make more dopamine. This increase in dopamine blocks your body from releasing prolactin, which then leads to a decrease in your milk production and your breast symptoms.

Who should not take cabergoline?

You should not take cabergoline if:

- You are allergic to cabergoline.
- You are currently breastfeeding and you would like to continue breastfeeding.
- You would like to start breastfeeding or lactating (for another child, or to donate milk).

Talk with your doctor before taking this medication if you have any of the following health conditions:

- High blood pressure
- Heart valve problems
- Thickening (fibrosis) in some areas like the lungs or the heart
- You take certain medications for your mood, mental health, gut motility, or to prevent nausea

What are the side effects of cabergoline?

Every medication comes with the risk of some side effects, but many people on cabergoline have no side effects or only have minor (not severe) side effects. Let your healthcare team know if you have any side effects that are bothering you or do not go away, such as:

- Constipation
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak
- Headache
- Upset stomach
- Cough
- Back pain
- Stomach pain

Call the emergency room if you have:

- An allergic reaction after taking the medicine (like hives or swelling)
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Seizure
- Very bad dizziness, or if you pass out (faint)
- Changes in the way you act
- Strong urges that are hard to control (such as uncontrollable urges for eating, gambling, sex, or spending money)

What are my instructions for taking cabergoline?

- Follow the instructions from your doctor.
- Usually, you will only take 1 dose within 24 hours of having surgery or giving birth. We may give this to you at the hospital or prescribe this for you to take at home.
- Taking the medication with food will help prevent you from feeling nauseous.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan (U-M) Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition, or your treatment plan.

Authors: Charisse Loder, MD, Catie Gliwa
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW CHES®

Patient Education by [U-M Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last revised 02/2025