

Breast and nipple care

Australian Breastfeeding Association



australian
breastfeeding
association

Many mothers have problems breastfeeding. All states have a free Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) counselling service. For more information contact the ABA at: www.breastfeeding.asn.au or an ABA office in your state.

To help relieve sore nipples

- Feed your baby often – don't put off feeds
- Before feeds:
 - make yourself comfortable and relax, remember your antenatal exercises
 - massage your breasts gently
 - apply warmth to your breasts (eg. warm shower, warm face washer)
 - express some milk to soften the areola, get milk flowing and to lubricate the nipple. For pain relief, try applying a covered block of ice to the nipple
- During feeds:
 - offer the less sore breast first
 - make sure baby is properly positioned at, and attached to, the breast
 - try different feeding positions
 - if you wish, restrict comfort sucking while nipples are tender. Gently break suction with clean finger before removing baby from the breast
- After feeds:
 - check your nipples for lines of stress, which indicate a problem
 - express a few drops of hindmilk and smear on the nipple. Leave bra open for a few minutes until nipples are dry
 - expose nipples briefly to warmth. Keep nipples dry. Change nursing pads frequently
- use breast shells to stop clothes rubbing and to allow air to circulate
- Avoid:
 - using anything on your nipples which is drying or which may damage nipple skin
 - using suction breast pumps

- wearing poorly fitted bras and plastic backed nursing pads
- using nipple shields
- See your medical adviser if soreness persists

To help cracked nipples

- Follow the suggestions for sore nipples while continuing to feed your baby
- If it is too painful to feed, take the baby off the breast temporarily to rest the nipple and allow healing
- Express by hand (not pump) to keep the milk flowing and to keep up your milk supply
- Feed the expressed milk to your baby
- Start feeding again gradually, with short feeds spaced out during the day
- See your medical adviser if healing is slow or you need pain relief
- Contact a lactation consultant, child health nurse or an ABA breastfeeding counsellor for further help

To relieve engorgement

- Feed your baby frequently from birth, without limiting sucking time
- Take your bra off completely before beginning to breastfeed
- Avoid giving other fluids
- Wake your baby for a feed if your breasts become full and uncomfortable
- Express a little before feeds if baby has trouble latching and staying on
- Massage the breast gently while you are feeding
- Use cold packs after a feed to keep you feeling comfortable

- If necessary, express after feeds
- Carefully use cool, washed cabbage leaf compresses
- Ask your medical adviser or hospital staff about pain relief if required

To help relieve blocked ducts

- Start treatment immediately
- Rest as much as possible
- Keep the affected breast as empty as possible by feeding frequently
- Apply warmth to the affected breast area before a feed
- Feed from the affected breast first, when baby is sucking vigorously
- Gently but firmly massage the lump toward the nipple during (and after) feeds
- Massage the breast gently while baby feeds
- Change feeding positions to help empty the breast
- Hand express if necessary
- Cold packs after a feed may help relieve pain
- See your medical adviser if you cannot clear the lump in 12 hours, or sooner if you develop a fever, breast becomes red, or you feel unwell

To relieve mastitis

- Start treatment immediately
- Follow all the suggestions for a blocked duct
- Consult your medical adviser as soon as possible
- Go to bed if you can, and take baby with you
- Breastfeed frequently

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