

Fact Sheet

FACT SHEET 8.
(CHS_FS_GNA_008)

ESTABLISHING BREASTFEEDING – (SWOLLEN BREASTS, BLOCKED DUCTS, MASTITIS)

Swollen Breasts

Swollen breasts in the first few weeks can be normal.

Tips

- Wear a comfortable, supporting bra that is not too tight.
- Take bra off to feed when able.
- Massage breasts gently during feeds.
- If baby is having difficulty attaching, gently express a small amount of milk to soften the areola (dark area around the nipple) before a feed.
- Demand feed your baby to keep your breasts comfortable (8-10 feeds in 24 hours).
- If your breasts become painful seek assistance from a breastfeeding trained professional.

Blocked Milk Duct

Hard, tender lump, may or may not be red

Tips

- Feed baby as often as possible starting with the affected breast.
- Gently massage the affected area towards the nipple while your baby is feeding to help clear the blockage.
- Start each feed on the affected side for 2-3 consecutive feeds to assist breast drainage. Offer second breast or express for comfort.
- To improve drainage of affected area it is best to have the baby's chin pointing towards the blocked duct.
- If baby's feeding has not reduced the affected area, gently massage toward the nipple while hand expressing.
- Apply warmth before a feed and cold afterwards to the area. (A warm shower or a cool compress can relieve pain or discomfort.)
- Check your bra is not too tight and remove during feeds if you prefer.
- Sleep without a bra as much as possible.
- Positioning and attachment should be checked.

If a blocked duct persists for longer than 12-24 hours seek assistance from a breastfeeding trained professional.

Source: Breastfeeding booklet compiled by the Community Child Health Service of the Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District.
Last Updated: August 2003
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Mastitis

Inflammation of the breast - hot red, painful breast and/or flu-like symptoms, eg. fever, headaches and aching joints.

Tips

- Continue to breastfeed - mastitis is not a reason to wean.
- Follow tips for blocked duct.
- If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms and fever see your GP immediately.
- Most antibiotics for mastitis are safe for the breastfeeding mother. Talk to your GP or Pharmacist about your treatment.
- Rest and plenty of fluids are important.

Remember

- Drainage of the affected breast is very important.
- Check your attachment is correct.

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