

# BREAST SORENESS

## Uncomfortably full breasts

A feeling of fullness is normal in the first few weeks. However, if your baby doesn't remove enough milk from your breasts, they may become uncomfortably full, hard or warm to the touch. This is called engorgement.

### Prevention:

- Position and latch-on your baby correctly.
- Breastfeed 8-12 times each 24 hours.
- Avoid pacifiers and bottles during the first few weeks.
- Avoid delaying or skipping feedings.

### Treatment:

#### *Before feedings:*

- Put a warm wet cloth on your breasts or take a warm shower to help your milk flow.
- Massage your breasts gently.
- Express some milk to soften your breast.

#### *Between feedings:*

- Put a cool cloth or an ice pack on your breasts for comfort and to help reduce swelling.

## Plugged duct/breast infection:

A plugged duct is a sore area on one breast, which is caused by breastmilk not moving through the milk duct. To treat a plugged duct:

- Breastfeed often. Try different positions. Baby's nose needs to point toward the tender spot on your breast to help remove the plug. Start on the sore side first.
- Before feeding, put a warm wet washcloth on your breast and massage the tender spot.
- Take care of yourself. Rest and eat well.

*If you also have flu-like symptoms or have a fever, you may have a breast infection. Contact your doctor, you may need an antibiotic. You can and should continue breastfeeding.*

## Prevention and treatment of sore nipples

In the first 2 to 4 days after giving birth, some nipple tenderness is common, especially when your baby latches-on. After the first few sucks, breastfeeding should be comfortable.

### Prevention:

- Position and latch-on your baby correctly.
- Try different positions.
- To take the baby off the breast, put your clean finger in the corner of your baby's mouth to break the suction.
- Use only water to wash your breasts when bathing.



### Treatment:

- If your nipples are very sore, take acetaminophen.
- Take a few deep breaths before feeding to relax.
- Before the feeding, ease the soreness by putting ice on your nipples for a few seconds.
- Start the feeding on the less sore nipple.
- Rub a few drops of breastmilk onto your nipple and areola after feeding. Let nipples air dry.
- Pain that continues during and between feedings, blisters, cracked and bleeding nipples are not normal. Call a breastfeeding specialist or your doctor for help.

## Thrush

Sore nipples may be caused by a condition called thrush, a common yeast infection.

- Your nipples may itch or burn.
- Your baby may have white patches in his mouth or a bright, red diaper rash.
- Your baby may refuse to breastfeed and be fussy.

*If you suspect thrush, contact your health care provider for medications for you and your baby. You can and should continue breastfeeding.*

