



Blocked Ducts and Mastitis

Blocked Ducts

A blocked duct is a lumpy or engorged area of the breast which may be sore and red. There may be pain when your milk lets down. Blocked ducts can happen at any time during lactation. It is important to begin treatment immediately as untreated blocked ducts can lead to mastitis.

Things to do:

- Keep the sore breast as empty as possible by frequent feeding. Many blocked ducts are cleared by the baby's sucking. Begin breastfeeding on that side so that it receives the most vigorous sucking. Continue to check the other breast for engorgement and blocked ducts.
- Gently but firmly massage the lump towards the nipple during and after feeds.
- Change your feeding position to help empty the breast. Pointing your baby's chin towards the sore area directs the most efficient suction to that area.
- Apply warmth to the sore area before a feed.
- Cold packs applied to the breast after a feed may help to relieve your pain.
- Rest as much as possible.
- Express by hand or pump if your baby won't feed or if it is too painful to feed.
- See your medical adviser if you cannot clear the lump in 12 hours or if you develop a fever or feel unwell.

Mastitis

Mastitis is the inflammation of breast tissue. Sometimes there is infection present. All or part of the breast can be red, swollen, hot and painful. The breast skin can be shiny, with red streaks. Your breastmilk may contain blood or yellow discharge. You may have a raised temperature and flu-like symptoms. This is NOT the time to wean. Untreated mastitis can cause a breast abscess.

Things to do:

- Begin treatment immediately.
- Continue with the suggestions for a blocked duct outlined above.
- Consult your medical adviser.
- Go to bed and rest if you can, taking your baby with you.
- Breastfeed frequently to keep your breast drained. Your milk is safe for your baby.
- Feed from the sore breast first while your baby is sucking vigorously.

- Express by hand or pump to help drain the breast completely.
- Ask your medical adviser or pharmacist about pain relief if required.
- Contact your child health nurse or Australian Breastfeeding Association counsellor for further help.

How can I prevent mastitis?

- Avoid hurried and interrupted feeds
- Don't let your breasts become too full.
- Avoid pressure on your breasts from tight bras, clothing, sleeping on your stomach etc.
- Look after your general health and try and minimise stress

REMEMBER

- START TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY.
- IF YOU CANNOT CLEAR A BLOCKED DUCT WITHIN 12 HOURS, OR YOU ARE FEVERISH, FEEL UNWELL, OR THE INFLAMMATION BECOMES WORSE, SEE YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY.

For more information contact your Child Health Centre or the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).

Breastfeeding Helpline
1800 mum 2 mum

1800 686 268

The ABA Breastfeeding Helpline is available 7 days a week and is staffed by trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors.

If you need help making phone calls in English, ring the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

Email counselling and more information is available at www.breastfeeding.asn.au