

Breastfeeding

SORE NIPPLES DURING BREASTFEEDING

Holding Your Baby · Baby's Latch · Treatment and Prevention

Some women experience nipple tenderness when breastfeeding, which usually disappears after one to two weeks. However, very sore, painful nipples are not normal. The most likely cause of sore nipples is improperly latching the baby to the breast.



BABY'S LATCH

- Position your baby with her nose to your nipple so she has to reach up slightly to latch to the nipple.
- Baby's mouth should be "yawn wide" with as much of the nipple area in her mouth as possible.
- Baby's chin should press firmly into the breast.

HOLDING YOUR BABY

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position using pillows to support your arms or your body as needed.
- Lean back and position your baby so that he is facing you. Your baby's head should not be turned.
- Sitting in a semi-reclined position can be more comfortable. Place your baby's tummy on your body and allow gravity to bring the baby close.
- Support your breast if needed. In a semi-reclined position you may find holding your breast is not necessary.
- Hold your baby close to prevent pulling of the breast. Break the suction with your finger before removing your baby from the breast.
- Relax and put your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible.

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

- Begin each feeding on the breast that is least sore.
- Feed your baby as soon as he shows signs of hunger, such as sucking on hands or fingers, smacking lips, or yawning (crying is a late sign of hunger).
- Hold your baby in different positions. This changes the direction of the pressure on your nipple.
- After each feeding, put a small amount of breast milk on your nipples and allow it to dry. Your breast milk will form a protective shield on your nipples and will help them heal.
- Purified lanolin may be applied to the nipple to promote healing. This does not need to be washed off before your baby nurses. Do not use soaps or lotions on your breasts.
- Make sure your bra fits properly. Change breast pads as they become damp.
- **Most Important** - Try different positions and find what is comfortable for you. One position does not fit all. Get help if unsure or experience pain.
- If necessary, hand express or pump to soften the breasts and relieve fullness.

Get help from your doctor or lactation consultant if you have:

- Redness, pain or soreness that does not go away.
- A burning or itching sensation in your nipples during feedings or after the feeding is over.
- Any drainage from damaged area.
- Signs of infection, such as weakness, headache, nausea, soreness, chills, or fever greater than 101 degrees.

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