

Preventing Problems: Sore Nipples



While breastfeeding should not hurt, nipple soreness is a common complaint for many breastfeeding moms. During the first few days of breastfeeding, your nipples may feel tender or sore. Pain that continues may be a sign that something is wrong. Nipple pain often indicates that baby's position or latch may need changing. It is important to find out what is causing you to have sore nipples and make changes so the pain does not become worse.

Ask for Help if you have:

- Intense nipple pain
- Cracked or bleeding nipples
- A burning or unusual feeling in your nipples or breasts

What You Can Do

Step 1: Holding Your Baby

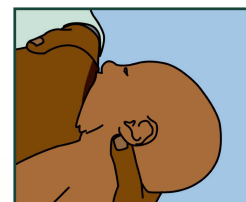
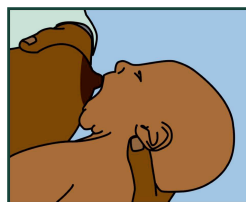
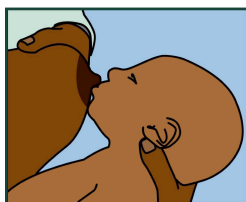
Try different breastfeeding positions that are comfortable for you.

- Choose a quiet, comfortable place and try to relax.
- Hold your baby close to your body.
- Have your baby's head, chest, and hips facing your body.
- Bring your baby to your breast not your breast to baby.

Step 2: Latch

With a good latch, your baby will take your breast deeply into her mouth.

- Aim your baby's nose to your nipple, with her head tilted slightly back.
- Tickle her upper lip with your nipple to get baby's mouth to open wide.
- Help your baby onto the breast, her chin and lower lip first.
- Your baby's mouth should cover your entire nipple and some of the areola (darker skin around your nipple).



Ask for Help

Ask your WIC Nutritionist or Peer Counselor to check your baby's latch. Talk to your doctor if your pain does not go away or if you begin to have sore nipples after pain-free breastfeeding.

Step 3. Taking Your Baby Off the Breast

Nipple soreness can be caused by how you take your baby off your breast. It is important to always break the suction when stopping a feeding. Slide a clean finger between baby's upper and lower gums and then slowly pull baby away from your breast.

Tips to Help With Nipple Soreness

Before latching, hand express a little milk to soften the breast and start the milk flowing.

- Try feeding your baby more often and for a shorter time.
- Start feeding your baby on the breast that is least sore first. You can switch to the more painful breast after your milk releases.
- Express breast milk and feed your baby from a cup or bottle until your nipple is healed.

Nipple Care

Try these tips to avoid discomfort

- *Let some breastmilk dry on your nipples after feedings. This will help heal your nipples and keep them germ-free.*
- *Avoid using soap which can cause dryness.*
- *Put a small amount of purified lanolin on your nipples to keep the skin moist. You do not need to wash this off before feedings.*
- *Avoid using creams, lotions or any products that require washing the nipple before feeding. These can cause further irritation.*
- *Changing breast pads, bras, and clothing if they become damp will help keep your nipples clean and dry.*

Bottles and Pacifiers

Using bottles or pacifiers during the early weeks may cause your baby to have sucking problems, which could lead to sore nipples. Try not to use a bottle or pacifier with your baby until breastfeeding is well established, about 4-6 weeks. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends using a pacifier at sleep time to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Breast Pumps

A breast pump that doesn't fit well or applies too much suction can also cause sore nipples and lead to nipple damage. If you are having soreness when using a breast pump, ask your peer counselor, WIC nutritionist or health care provider for help.

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