



Treating Breast Pain

It's not unusual for your baby to have a little trouble latching on (<https://healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Ensuring-Proper-Latch-On.aspx>) the first few times you breastfeed. Some babies suck on the nipple without taking enough of the areola into the mouth, which can result in a lot of pain for you. Your nipples may even become cracked and sore, and you may be tempted to stop breastfeeding.



In the days and weeks following childbirth, it is important to have your pediatrician or lactation specialist check to make sure that correct latching on has been achieved, since improper latching on can seriously decrease your baby's milk intake as well as your milk production. It can also cause painful cracks in your nipples that will make breastfeeding uncomfortable until they heal.

What you can do

Many women find that their nipples are somewhat sensitive for the first few days, until they become used to breastfeeding. To prevent soreness, wash your breasts with warm water when bathing and avoid using soap, which can dry and irritate your nipples.

If your nipples do become sore or even cracked, check again to be sure that your baby's lips and gums are on the areola as she nurses and not just on the nipple. If possible, vary her position at each feeding. Sometimes a simple switch in positions can make all the difference.

Avoid exposing your nipples to excessive moisture between feedings, too. If you are wearing plastic breast shells to treat inverted nipples, remove them after thirty minutes, since these devices hold in moisture. Refrain from using plastic-lined nursing pads for the same reason.

Gently pat your nipples dry after a feeding and then apply colostrum, breast milk, or medical-grade purified lanolin to soothe and heal them. (Creams and lotions generally will not help and may actually make the problem worse.)

If these steps fail to solve the problem, ask your doctor or lactation specialist for help. In most cases, nipple soreness is a temporary issue and should not stand in the way of successful breastfeeding.

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