

Plugged Ducts & Mastitis

Plugged Ducts

If you notice a small lump the size of a pea in your breasts, it may be a plugged duct. This occurs when a portion of the breast does not get emptied completely during feedings.

Remedy:

- Apply a warm compress to the area before feeding
- Massage the lump towards the nipple during a feeding
- It may take 2 or 3 feedings for it to completely empty. Position your baby's chin or nose towards the area of the lump. This is where the greatest emptying will occur.
- If you find a persistent lump that does not respond to these measures, please see your healthcare provider. It could be a different problem.



Plugged Nipple Pore (Bleb)

This appears as a small white dot on the tip of the nipple and is usually very painful. It is one milk duct that has become plugged.



Remedy:

- Warm soaks and gentle rubbing with a warm towel may be effective to release the milk.
- In persistent cases, you may need to see your health care provider for unroofing (taking the upper layer of skin off of the bleb)

Mastitis

This occurs most frequently in mothers who have had a cracked or blistered nipple or who are undergoing a period of stress such as returning to work, participating in holiday activities, or experiencing a change in normal daily routine.



Symptoms may include:

- High fever, starting suddenly
- Hot area
- Red streaks
- Pain and a lump in the breast
- Hard, wedge-shaped area
- Flu like symptoms and chills
- Extreme tiredness
- Discoloration of skin, may appear red in lighter skin tones

Remedy

- Early, frequent breastfeeding
- Applying moist heat before feeding (shower or compress)
- Correct positioning and alignment to achieve deep latch
- Gentle massage and compression during a feed
- Hand express or pump for relief before or after feeding, if needed
- Ice pack after feeding



Your health care provider will prescribe an antibiotic. You must take a full 7-10 day course of medication. Do not stop taking it until the prescription is gone even though you start to feel better. Inadequately treated mastitis is more likely to return.



The information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your healthcare provider for any questions you may have regarding your or your infant's medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this information. Feel free to duplicate per creative commons license CC BY-ND.

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