

Mastitis in Breastfeeding

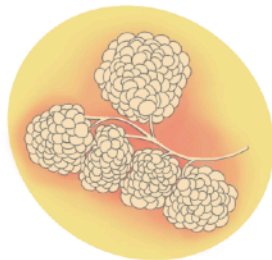
General Information:

- Mastitis is inflammation of the breast. You may have redness, pain, and swelling.
- Most cases of mastitis resolve by treating inflammation (see below). Antibiotics are not needed in most cases.
- Milk is made and stored in groups of milk sacs called "lobules." Milk is not stored in ducts.
- Painful lumps are caused by full milk sacs. Ducts become narrow from swelling around them. Milk may flow slowly but there is no "plug." Squeezing will not help.
- Engorgement refers to breasts with very full milk sacs. It is not mastitis.
- Skipping feeding or pumping may cause redness and discomfort. This is not infection. This is inflammation.

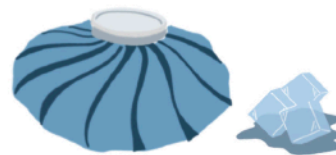
Treatment:

- Use ice or cold compresses. Cold reduces pain and inflammation. Cold helps like it helps a sprained ankle.
- Use anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving medications: ibuprofen and acetaminophen (paracetamol).
- Wear a supportive bra to help swelling.
- Deep massage and squeezing will cause injury and make the inflammation worse.
- Do not feed more or express more milk on the side with the problem.
- Stop feeding or pumping if no milk is flowing. The swelling must improve first.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you do not feel better in 24 hours.
- Breastfeeding and breast milk are safe with mastitis, abscesses, and taking antibiotics.

With inflammation, milk sacs are large and lumpy. Cold compresses decrease swelling.



Inflamed



Ice



Healthy

Abscesses and Milk Cysts:

- An abscess is a collection of pus (infected fluid).
- A milk cyst (galactocele) is a collection of milk.
- Abscesses and milk cysts often occur with too much milk production (hyperlactation).
- An abscess will need to be drained. A milk cyst will not need drainage if it is small. You can still breastfeed from the breast with the abscess or cyst, even before drainage.

Prevention:

- Avoid pumping if possible when you have mastitis or related symptoms. Pumping can injure breasts and nipples.
- Feed at the breast or hand express when possible.
- Do not pump large amounts of milk to store.
- Avoid nipple shields.
- If you have too much milk (hyperlactation), get help to reduce milk production.