

Sore Nipples

Whether it is your first time breastfeeding or if you have breastfed a baby before, it is common for a mom to feel discomfort when starting breastfeeding. The discomfort should be limited, though. If you have nipple soreness beyond the first 30 to 60 seconds, you need a latch evaluation. Trauma to nipples can happen due to a poor latch, bad positioning, a teething baby, an abnormal baby suckle, poor fit of a breast pump flange, incorrect breast pump settings, use of a nipple shield, or a bacterial or fungal infection.

Call an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant or your health care provider right away if you have:

- Intense stabbing or pinching pain while breastfeeding
- Pain that occurs throughout the feeding
- Nipple pain even when not breastfeeding
- Experiencing nipple pain beyond the first two weeks
- Nipple trauma such as blisters, bleeding, bruising, cracks, rash, or bright red color

The best way to keep your nipples healthy during breastfeeding is to follow these best practices:

- Watch for early **feeding cues** - This makes it easier to latch a baby properly.
- Avoid **engorgement** – babies have a hard time latching properly when the breast is engorged.
- **Hold the baby's body close** to your body. This helps the baby latch deeply onto the breast beyond the tip of the nipple.
- Check your **baby's position**. Poor positioning can cause a painful latch
- Ensure a **deep latch** to avoid nipple pain. Baby should latch onto the breast beyond the nipple.
- Avoid using soap or cream on your nipples because your skin may become irritated. Allow your nipples to air dry after breastfeeding. Breastmilk can help fight infections and skin irritations.
- If using nursing pads, avoid using pads that have a plastic lining. Change them often so your nipples stay dry in between feedings to reduce the risk of infection.
- Ask for help before trying medicinal creams, gel pads, or a nipple shield. These items may reduce nipple pain from breastfeeding, but they do not correct the reason for the pain and may even delay nipple healing.

Call your health care provider or your WIC office if your sore nipples continue. You can also call the ADHS 24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline at 1-800-833-4642 to help resolve painful nipples.

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Steps to a Good Latch		
Tickle your baby's lips with your nipple. This will help baby open their mouth wide.	Aim your nipple just above your baby's top lip. Make sure your baby's chin isn't tucked into their chest.	Aim your baby's lower lip away from the base of your nipple. Baby's lips should be turned outward like a fish. Your baby should lead into the breast chin first and then latch onto your breast. Your baby's tongue should be extended, and your breast should fill your baby's mouth.
If your baby latches just on the tip of your nipple or it hurts, gently put a clean finger in your baby's mouth to break the latch, then try again.		



24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline
1-800-833-4642

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