

## **COMMON BREASTFEEDING PROBLEMS**

Women can experience several different problems while nursing. Many of the common issues associated with breastfeeding can be treated successfully. Often women can do some treatments at home on their own. Many pediatrician's offices have breastfeeding consultants on staff that can assist nursing women.

### **ENGORGEMENT**

This is the term used to describe breasts that are too full of milk. This condition can make it difficult for the baby to latch on. Engorged breasts are swollen, hard, warm and painful.

The best way to treat engorged breasts is to express milk in between feedings with either a breast pump or your hand. It is important not to express too much milk. Limit pumping to 2-5 minutes. Expressing too much milk can cause engorgement to get worse.

Other home remedies to reduce pain include:

- Use a cold pack
- Pain relieving medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Aleve)
- Take a warm shower
- Gently massage breasts to start milk flow

### **SORE NIPPLES**

Some nipple soreness is normal during the first minute of each session of nursing. Pain that lasts the whole session is usually not normal. Common causes include nipple cracks, blisters or bruises. This can happen if the baby does not have a good latch. Some babies have a condition called "tongue-tied" which is when the tongue cannot move as freely as it should (sometimes this condition requires surgery to release the tongue).

The most important thing you can do to prevent and deal with nipple pain is to make sure the baby latches on correctly. Using the "C" hold allows you to better see how the baby is latching. The "C" hold means that you cup your breast with your thumb on the top and rest the breast in the palm of your hand.

Other home remedies for nipple pain include:

- If your nipples are cracked or raw, you can try lanolin ointment. If you think your nipples might be infected call your doctor.
- Apply a cool or warm washcloth to your nipples.
- Pain relieving medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
- Wear breast pads between feedings to protect your nipples.

## **BLOCKED MILK DUCTS**

A blocked milk duct causes a red painful breast lump. It can also cause a white plug on the nipple.

If you have a blocked duct, nurse frequently. Always begin and end feedings with the affected breast. Use different breastfeeding positions to encourage complete emptying of the breast ie; side lying, crossbody, football hold. To encourage milk flow you can try a warm shower or compress prior to nursing. Massaging the breast before a feeding is also helpful.

Other home remedies to try:

- Lecithin 1200 mg four times a day (soy or sunflower)
- Culturelle (probiotic)
- Vitamin C 120 mg a day

## **BREAST INFECTIONS**

A breast infection or mastitis can cause a fever and a hard, red, and swollen area of the breast. Some women also experience muscle aches and chills. Mastitis is not a reason to stop breastfeeding. If you think you have mastitis **please call the office so** we can help you. We may ask you to come in for a visit so we can evaluate your symptoms. Frequently we will have you start an antibiotic prior to your appointment.

To treat mastitis you can:

- Take a pain relieving medicine like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Aleve, or Motrin)
- Massage your breasts during feedings
- Use a breast pump to empty your breasts after feedings
- Lecithin 1200 mg four times a day (soy or sunflower)
- Culturelle (probiotic)
- Vitamin C 120 mg a day
- Apply ice or heat to the area on the affected breast
- Take antibiotics as prescribed

## **NIPPLE COLOR CHANGES**

Your nipples can turn white, blue, or red, and be painful. This can happen when the blood vessels in the nipples become narrow. Nipple color changes and pain can also occur if the baby is not latching on properly.

To treat nipple color changes you can:

- Be certain that the baby is latching on correctly.
- Turn up the room temperature and wear warm clothes.
- Put a warm cloth over your breast before and after nursing.

- Avoid foods with caffeine (caffeine can make this problem worse).

**PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU HAVE:**

- A blocked milk duct that does not get better after 3 days
- Fever and a hard, red, and swollen area of the breast
- Blood leaking from the nipples
- Pain that leads for the whole breastfeeding session