

## Breast-feeding: Plugged Milk Ducts/Mastitis

### Treatment for a plugged duct:

A plugged milk duct is caused by a decrease in the flow of milk from one part of the breast. There is usually soreness or tenderness in that specific area. Sometimes a blister or pearl-like plug appears at the tip of the nipple. This might result in constant nipple pain or a shooting pain to the chest wall. Women with plugged ducts often complain of headache.

1. Apply a cool, moist compress to the affected area.
2. Frequent nursing of both breasts every 2 to 3 hours around the clock. Nurse for at least 15 minutes on each breast or until the breasts feel softer.
3. Always start nursing on the breast that has the plugged duct.
4. Gently massage forward from the affected point with your fingertips while nursing.
5. Nurse with your bra off and do not wear underwire bras.
6. Drink extra fluids.
7. Position your baby while nursing so that his nose points to the plugged duct.
8. Avoid sleeping on your abdomen.
9. Take a mild pain pill, such as Tylenol or Advil, if needed.

10. Limit the amount of salt you add to your food.
11. Take your iron pills if you are anemic.
12. Change wet breast pads often, at least once an hour.
13. Do not press against your breasts or nipples to stop leaking.

### Mastitis:

Mastitis is an infection. It can result from unrelieved plugged ducts. The area is red, swollen and tender. You may have flu-like symptoms, such as aching joints, severe headache, nausea or vomiting, fever or chills.

There is no need to stop nursing. In most cases, the infection is in the breast and not in the milk. If you stop nursing suddenly, you may make the problem worse.

Contact your doctor or nurse-midwife if you think you have mastitis. You may need to take antibiotics. If so, you must take the antibiotics until all the pills are gone. If you do not take all the pills, the mastitis can come back again. If you do not feel better after 48 hours on antibiotics, contact your doctor or midwife.

In addition to taking the antibiotic, follow steps 1 through 13 listed under "Treatment for a plugged duct." It is important for you to rest! Take baby to bed with you if possible. You should rest in bed at least during the time you have flu-like symptoms.

