



IMPORTANT

- Continue breastfeeding
- Baby will not get sick from breastfeeding on a breast that has mastitis.

Breastfeeding Mastitis

What is mastitis?

- Mastitis is a bacterial infection of the breast tissue and/or the milk ducts.

Possible causes of mastitis are:

- a sudden decrease in the number of feedings, leading to milk stasis
- an untreated plugged milk duct
- being overtired and experiencing increased stress
- cracked nipples
- inadequate drainage of the breasts

Possible signs and symptoms of mastitis include:

- sudden onset
- flu-like symptoms such as feeling tired, headache, muscle aches, fever (> 38 degrees) and chills
- red, hot, swollen and hard area in the breast
- intense pain in one area of the breast

What can you do?

- Breastfeed often, (if possible, at least every 2-3 hours); the baby will not get sick from nursing on the affected side.
- Before feeding the baby, apply warm, moist cloths to the sore area; gently massage the breast.
- Breastfeed on the sore side first, at each feeding.
- Make sure baby is well latched and is sucking well at the breast; use breast compression or gentle massage/ pressure over the affected area if it is not too uncomfortable.
- Try different nursing positions to assist in draining the breast well.
- If baby is not draining the breast well, hand express or pump after feeding.
- Wear a well fitted bra that does not put pressure onto the breasts.
- Get extra rest. Try to lay on your back or your unaffected side if possible.
- When possible, at least 3 times a day, soak

affected breast in a warm bathtub or over a basin of water for 10 minutes, between feedings.

- Can try other methods of heat (careful not to burn yourself) such as warm showers, warm wet packs, heating pad, hot water bottle, microwave heat pack, etc.
- You may wish to take an anti-inflammatory/analgesic, as directed.
- Consult your physician within 24 hours if symptoms persist; an antibiotic may be indicated.
- After treatment begins, you should start feeling better within 24-28 hours.

Adapted with permission from:
Breastfeeding Committee for Saskatchewan
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region