



IMPORTANT

- Breastfeeding should not hurt.
- Ask for help when learning to latch baby to the breast.
- If nipples remain sore or if cracked nipples do not heal, ask for help.

Breastfeeding

Sore Nipples

What may cause sore nipples?

- baby is not latched properly
- baby is not sucking properly
- baby is not being held in a good position at the breast
- incorrect use of the breast pump
- thrush infection
- nipple bleb (white spot on the nipple that causes pain—discuss with Lactation Consultant)
- Raynaud’s phenomenon (restriction of blood flow to the nipples—discuss with Lactation Consultant)

How to prevent sore nipples?

- If nursing hurts, break the latch and reposition the baby on the breast.
- Make sure baby’s mouth is open wide “like a yawn” with the tongue out over the bottom gum line.
- Hold baby close to your body (baby’s tummy to your tummy).
- If your breasts feel too hard for your baby to latch on to, hand express for a few minutes before the feeding to soften them.
- In the early days, nurse your baby every 2 to 3 hours to prevent engorgement.
- Change breast pads when damp.
- If pumping and your nipples are sore, check the size of the flange and/or the suction level of your pump.

What can you do if you have sore nipples?

- Nurse on the least sore side first.
- Hold the baby in different positions to nurse.
- Express a few drops of breast milk after feeding and leave it on your nipples to dry; some mothers also find Lansinoh or Purelan creams soothing.
- Apply warm salt water compresses for 5 minutes

after feeding or until the water is cold (1/2 tsp. salt to 1 cup of warm water or 2.5 ml. salt to 250 ml. of warm water).

- Apply warm moist tea bags (not herbal) to the nipple after feeds for 15 minutes; tannic acid in the tea is an astringent that pulls together the edges of a wound and, therefore, promotes healing.
- Wear breast shells to allow air to circulate and promote healing; ensure that the shells do not restrict the ducts and cause blockages.
- Get assistance from a Lactation Consultant
- Nipple shields may be used as a last option, under the guidance of a Lactation Consultant and with regular follow up.

Adapted with permission from:

Breastfeeding Committee for Saskatchewan
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region