

SORE OR CRACKED NIPPLES



There can be many causes of sore or cracked nipples. Identifying the cause can provide relief and make feeding your baby more comfortable.

Experiencing some nipple pain or soreness up to two weeks after baby's birth is not uncommon and can be due to hormonal changes. However, pain which does not resolve within a few seconds is not normal and may indicate a problem with positioning, latch, or something else.



Remember, if you have sore or cracked nipples, seek help quickly to prevent more severe breast or chest complications. Talk to WIC staff - we are here to support you!

LATCH AND POSITIONING FOR RELIEF

Ensure your baby has a good latch. A good latch consists of:

1. Use a "sandwich" hold on your breast to flatten the tissue.
2. Holding your breast, point the nipple toward your infant's nose while their mouth is open wide.



3. Slip your nipple into baby's mouth. Their lips should be wide and spread out as they latch; think "fish" lips.
4. If baby's latch hurts after a few seconds, insert a clean finger into their mouth to break the latch seal, and try again.

Good positioning consists of:

1. Having baby close to you - either tummy to tummy or chest to chest with their arms and legs tucked in to avoid pulling on the breast or chest.
2. Your baby's face should be across from your nipple or "nose to nipple."
3. Being comfortable - a 'good' position should be relaxing for you and baby, with your bodies close together and baby's limbs near your body.



CARE AND RELIEF FOR SORE NIPPLES



- Routinely wash your hands, including artificial nails, with soap and water before and after you handle your breasts or chest to prevent infection.

- Wear all-cotton bras or supports if possible.

- Keep your nipples dry and

clean. To prevent infection, wash cracked nipples once a day with mild soap and water. Apply a thin layer of human milk to your nipples after feedings and allow them to air dry.

- If using bra pads, ensure they stay dry and change them out throughout the day. Avoid bra pads with plastic backing, which holds moisture in.

- Avoid applying nipple creams, lanolin, lotion, or oils to your nipples. This can cause further irritation or infection.

- If your chest is overly full before feedings, hand express or pump briefly to help your baby latch easier and take more of your areola into their mouth.



OTHER POSSIBLE CAUSES OF SORE OR CRACKED NIPPLES

- Pain can sometimes indicate a breast or chest infection, caused by bacteria (mastitis) or yeast (thrush).
- Improper use of a breast pump, such as using too much suction or the wrong flange size, can cause trauma and pain. Talk to WIC staff if you have questions about your pump.



- Breast or chest being overly full or engorged.

- Nipple creams and oils may cause allergic reactions or trigger skin conditions, like eczema, causing nipple pain.

- Other less common causes of nipple pain are:

- Baby has a tongue tie, lip tie, or both.
- A plugged duct near the nipple, which causes pain when baby latches.
- A nipple 'bleb' or plugged nipple pore.
- Vasospasms, which cause whiteness in the nipple.



If a wound on your nipple is not healing or you continue to experience pain for more than a few days, talk to your healthcare provider and the WIC lactation consultant. You may need additional treatment and care for your sore or cracked nipples.



If you suspect you have any of these conditions or have questions, reach out to your healthcare provider and the WIC lactation consultant for care and support.

RESOURCES

WIC Breastfeeding Support

Information on sore or cracked nipples and common breastfeeding or chestfeeding challenges and concerns.

<https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/>

Office on Women's Health

General information regarding common breastfeeding or chestfeeding discomforts.

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding>

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about these breastfeeding or chestfeeding discomforts:



1-800-8-NEV-WIC
(1-800-8-638-942)
NEVADAWIC.ORG

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