



Breastfeeding...

feels good

How do I take care of my breasts before my baby is born?

Your breasts do not need special care **before** your baby is born. Do not use soap, creams or perfume on your breasts. Soap can cause dryness and cracking.

How do I take care of my breasts after my baby is born?

Your breasts do not need special care **after** your baby is born. Do not use soaps, creams or perfume on your breasts.

After feeding gently rub a drop or two of breast milk onto your nipples and let them dry.

Keep your nipples dry between feedings.

If you wish, you may use a hairdryer set on cool to dry your nipples. If you use breast pads, change them when they get wet.

What happens if my breasts feel full and hard?

If your breasts become too full and hard, your baby may have trouble feeding. This may make your nipples sore.



What can I do if my breasts get full and hard?

Before you feed your baby, have a warm bath or shower. Gently massage your breasts towards the nipples. Express enough milk to make the darker part of your breast feel softer. You may express milk by hand or by using a breast pump. Then nurse your baby.

Do not use a pump with a rubber bulb.

A cotton bra that supports your breasts may make you feel more comfortable. Use cold packs on your breasts between feedings. If you are very sore, ask your doctor or nurse what you can take for the pain.

This feeling should go away in one or two days.

What if my nipples get sore?

If your nipples hurt after the first few sucks of each feeding, your baby may not be feeding the right way on your breast. Once your baby is feeding well, your nipples will feel better.

Breastfeeding should not hurt.

If it hurts, gently take your baby off the breast and try again.

Do this by gently putting a finger into the corner of your baby's mouth. This will break the suction.

Hold your baby so that his or her body is facing yours. Open the baby's arms around you like a hug.

Hold your breast with your free hand. Stroke the baby's lips with the nipple until the baby's mouth opens wide, like a yawn. Then quickly pull the baby onto your breast.

Have the baby take in a large mouthful of breast. Hold your baby close while nursing. Try different positions when you are nursing your baby.

Feed your baby often. Do not let your baby get very hungry between feedings. A very hungry baby may hurt your nipples.

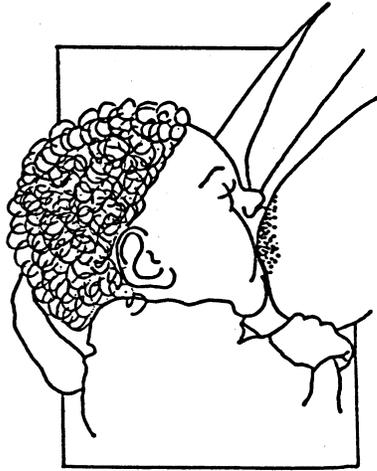


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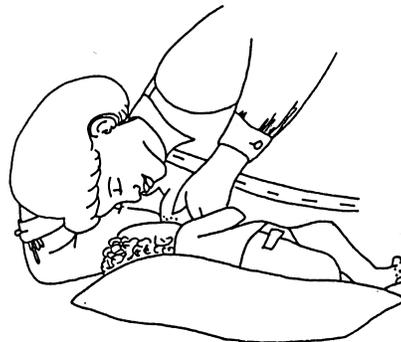
If it still hurts, ask someone who knows about breastfeeding to help you and your baby.

Once your baby is nursing well, your nipples will feel better and will heal quickly.

This picture shows a baby correctly latched onto the breast.



These pictures show positions you can use to nurse your baby.



What should I do if I feel sick and my breasts hurt?

Call the doctor right away, if your breast hurts, and you:

- have chills or a fever
- see a red patch on your breast
- see red streaks on your breast
- feel as if you have the flu

It is best to nurse often on a sore breast. Go to bed and rest. Use hot or cold packs to help the pain. If your doctor gives you antibiotics, take them until they are all gone.

Do not stop taking them because you feel better.
Do not stop nursing your baby.

If you are not feeling better after 24 hours, call your doctor again.

What can I do if my breast hurts, but I do not feel sick?

If your breast hurts but you do not feel sick, you may have a plugged duct.

Try these things to help:

- nurse your baby often
- change your nursing positions often
- check that your bra is not too tight, or
- nurse without a bra
- gently massage the sore area while you are nursing, or having a shower. Try to massage from the sore spot towards your nipple, gently with your fingers.

If the sore area is still there after trying these things for 24 hours, call your doctor.



There are many people who can answer questions or help you with breastfeeding when you get home.

Some choices are:

- ☞ your Public Health Nurse
- ☞ La Leche League or Breastfeeding Support Group
- ☞ a breastfeeding clinic
- ☞ a breastfeeding consultant
- ☞ your doctor

Public Health Services

