

# How To Treat Sore Nipples

## How to Get a Deep Latch

A deep latch is the best way to help your baby breastfeed well and help prevent sore nipples. The Allina Health fact sheet “How To Latch-on” gives great tips on how to get a good and effective latch.

When your nipples have become sore and injured in spite of your efforts to get a good latch, here are some tips.

## How to Reduce Nipple Soreness When Latching Your Baby

- Before your baby latches, massage your breast gently to encourage the milk to let down. Express a small amount of your breast milk. It will help soften the area around the nipple so your baby can get a deeper more comfortable latch.

When the milk is flowing, it will help your newborn get milk sooner once latched. Baby will be less likely to fuss and pull off and on and cause increased soreness.

- Consider starting your baby’s feedings on the breast that is least sore.
  - Gently brush your nipple across baby’s lips to encourage a rooting response. Your baby will smell the colostrum that you have expressed and this will help baby to open the mouth wide.
  - When baby’s jaw opens wide, bring baby quickly and deeply on to the breast. Lead with the chin when latching.

- After a few minutes of swallowing breast milk on the first side, baby will be more calm and satisfied. Break the latch on the first side and offer the second side.

With a more satisfied baby, there is less chance of causing increased discomfort on the side that is more sore.

## How to Help Nipples Heal

Nipple soreness and injury can happen despite your best efforts to get your baby to latch deeply when nursing. Here are some suggestions to help soothe and heal your nipples.

- After feeding, gently express milk onto your nipples and areolas and let them dry. Breastmilk has many healing properties.
- Use a healing nipple cream after feeding. Some options are a USP-modified lanolin nipple cream or an organic softening nipple salve. Check with your health care provider or lactation consultant for product suggestions.
- Wear hydrogel nursing pads. Check with your health care provider or lactation consultant for product suggestions.
- Wear a nursing bra that fits well and use bra pads to catch milk that leaks between feedings. Change the pads often to keep tender nipples from being wet all the time.
- Ask your health care provider if a prescription cream is right for you.

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- If it's too painful to feed at your breast, don't give up! Pump your breast for 15 minutes every 3 hours to collect your breastmilk for your baby. This will give your nipples time to heal and preserve your milk supply. Call your lactation consultant to help with the plan.

## **When To Call Your Lactation Consultant**

Call your lactation consultant if your:

- pain doesn't go away or if it gets worse
- nipples start to blister, crack or bleed.