

Breastfeeding: Sore, Cracked, or Bleeding Nipples

Sore, cracked, or bleeding nipples can make breastfeeding very painful.

Causes

- Your baby is not positioned or latched properly on your breast.
- Your baby is not sucking properly on your breast.
- Your baby has a thrush infection in his or her mouth (white patches on the inside of mouth or on tongue).
- Your baby has a short or tight frenulum (tongue tie).

Ways to heal

During feeding

- Make sure you have the best latch possible - see Position and Latch fact sheet. Most often, correcting the latch will make breastfeeding much more comfortable.
- Begin feeding on your least sore side until after letdown occurs. Switch to your sore side.
- Breastfeed using different positions.
- Break the suction of your baby's latch before you take the baby off your breast. Insert your finger into the corner of baby's mouth to ensure there is no further damage to the nipples from your baby pulling off the breast.

After feeding

- Express some breastmilk and gently rub it onto your nipples and areola.
- Air your nipples as much as possible.
- Apply a small amount of pure lanolin or a prescribed nipple ointment to your nipples.

Other suggestions

- A well-fitting bra allows for comfort and air circulation - bra pads, especially if they are plastic-lined, can trap moisture and make your nipples worse.
- Change damp nursing pads often.
- Use breast shells or roll tissues into a circle and place them around your nipples when you are wearing a bra. This will allow air flow and prevent your bra or pads from sticking to your nipples.
- Call Client and Community Support at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006 for further support.

