



# Breast care for nursing mothers

Breastfeeding your baby is one of the most fulfilling experiences in life. But if nursing leaves your breasts tender and sore, especially when first starting out, satisfaction gives way to discomfort. Proper breast care can help minimize this problem, though.

This includes checking your breasts and nipples on a regular basis to identify possible problems early on.



- Wear good support cotton bras throughout your pregnancy.
- Wear a nursing bra day and night as long as your baby is breastfeeding.
- Avoid wearing bras that have a plastic liner.
- Change your bra or breast pads when they become damp or wet.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before each feeding.
- Alternate breasts when nursing.
- In most cases, it is best to let the baby nurse for as long as they need to, which may be 20 or more minutes on each side. Shorter feedings won't necessarily help prevent sore nipples.
- Don't pull the baby away from your breast. Instead, break the suction by gently inserting your finger between the baby's mouth and your breast.
- Expect some temporary swelling for the first few days you breastfeed. Warm showers and ice packs can relieve discomfort.
- After each feeding, put a few drops of breastmilk or 100% lanolin on your nipples to help moisturize them.
- Wash your breasts daily, using warm water and a soft cloth. Don't use soap; it can dry your skin and irritate your breasts.
- If you think your baby is not latching correctly, try holding your baby in different positions. Also, ask someone experienced with breastfeeding or a lactation consultant for more tips.

If your breasts are red, inflamed, and painful despite precautions, consult your doctor.