

Sore Nipples

If your nipples get sore, the last thing you want to have is your baby sucking as hard as he or she can. Your fear of this pain may also decrease your milk production which can frustrate your baby and cause him or her to suck harder, which can make your nipples even more sore. Prevention is easy and the best way to avoid sore nipples.

PREVENTION

Proper nipple position

Make sure the baby has a good grasp of the nipple as well as the brown area around the nipple (areola) NEVER allow the baby to suck on just the nipple! You can hold your breast into a good position in the baby's mouth by holding the breast from below throughout the feeding so that the nipple and areola are not pulled out of your baby's mouth by the weight of the breast.

Frequent nursings

Nurse every 2 hours while the baby is awake so the baby doesn't get "starved" and grab onto the breast and nurse too fast and hard.

Break your baby's sucking at the end of nursing

Be careful to break your baby's sucking (the baby's grasp on the nipple) if he or she does not let go at the end of feeding by placing your finger in the corner of the baby's mouth and pressing down on the breast. Never end nursing by pulling the breast away or by allowing the baby to pull on the nipple.

Change your nursing position

Changing your nursing positions will put pressure on different parts of the areola and help keep any one area from becoming too sore.

Keep nipple skin smooth

Applying a small amount of breast milk, lanolin cream, or "udder cream" at the end of each feeding may help prevent cracking.

Sunlight and air

Leave bra flaps down or remove your bra to let your nipples get some air and sun. A soft blouse or T-shirt may also help.

TREATMENT

- Change sides. Nurse on the side that is less sore.
- Apply an ice pack in a wet washcloth to your nipples to relieve pain. The cold will also cause the nipples to become erect and easier for baby to grasp.
- Take deep, relaxing breaths when the baby grabs the nipple and continue to take deep ones until the pain begins to go away.