



## **So, now you are breastfeeding and it is nothing like you imagined!**

Your nipples are sore and cracked, your breasts are engorged and hurt, your baby won't latch. These are just some of the all too common pitfalls during breastfeeding. Don't be discouraged, there are solutions to these problems and the many more that may occur while you breast feed your baby.

### **“My Baby Won't Stay Awake To Feed”**

A mouthful of milk is the best way to signal your baby to wake-up and eat. Gently squeeze your breast not only your nipple between your thumb and fingers, your baby will start sucking and swallowing. Lightly stroking the cheek down towards the chin or gently rubbing the bottom of baby's feet can also help.

### **“Latching Hurts”**

The most common reason for painful latching is positioning. Try changing position and make sure you baby is “tummy to tummy” with you. Your nipple should be in the upper portion of the baby's mouth, towards the roof of the mouth. A boppy pillow can help you with position, especially if you are sore from a c-section. If changing positions does not help, call your doctor or lactation counselor. Remember, a little sensitivity or tenderness is normal, but pain is not normal after the initial latch while you and your baby are learning to breastfeed.

### **“My Baby Won't Latch”**

“Skin to skin” is the magic cure. Get naked from the waist up, strip baby to the diaper, find a comfortable semi-reclining place to sit and place baby on your chest. Your baby should relax and snuggle, when he is ready, he'll scoot to the breast and attempt to latch on. More times than not, latching will happen naturally. You may have to express a little milk on to your nipple or shift your position a little so baby and you are “tummy to tummy”. Your baby is very smart and they usually figure out how to latch on their own. You and your baby can go “skin to skin” many times a day. It is a great bonding experience for you and baby.

### **“My Breasts Are Engorged and Hurt”**

This normally happens when your milk comes in about 3 days after your baby is born. Swelling and soreness can be worse if your had IV fluids during labor and delivery, as you may have edema in the breast tissue as well as the increased breastmilk. Frequent breastfeeding, hand expression, and gentle massage will help to relieve the discomfort.

- Pumping milk for few minutes or hand expression before putting your baby to the breast may help to soften the breast and nipple for a better latch.
- Apply warm, wet washcloths to your breasts before you breastfeed, and apply cold compresses - a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a paper towel works great afterwards. Mark the bag of peas so you can reuse it.

### **“My Breasts Hurt After I Feed My Baby”**

For tenderness after you feed your baby, place a cool compress (a small bag of frozen peas works great) on breasts for a few minutes. As you and your baby learn to breastfeed, the tenderness will diminish.

### **“My Nipples Are Sore and Cracked”**

The leading cause of sore nipples is improper positioning causing a poor latch. Remember “tummy to tummy”. Sometimes improper sucking may be a cause (shallow latch, tongue tie/tight frenulum or the anatomy of baby’s mouth). Try repositioning the baby for a better latch. This will usually relieve the soreness. If your nipples are cracked, you can try all purpose nipple ointment (ask your doctor or lactation counselor), cold compresses, a breast shell placed in your bra to relieve friction and you expose nipple to air as much as possible. You also may have an infection on your nipple that needs to be treated. Call your doctor if you don’t feel better.

### **“All My Baby Does Is Eat”**

For many new babies this is perfectly normal. Remember her tummy is very small and breast milk is digested quickly. She needs to eat frequently to grow and gain weight. As your baby grows, the frequency of feedings should begin to spread out. Babies usually double their weight during the first six months, thus requiring frequent feedings.

### **“My Breast Has a Painful, Red Spot”**

This could be a plugged duct or a cracked nipple that has turned into an infection such as mastitis. Keep nursing, nurse frequently, apply heat, and gentle massage. If symptoms do not improve in 24 hours or you develop a fever greater than 100.4 degrees, contact your doctor or midwife.

### **“My Breast Is Really Tender and Hot too the Touch, I Feel Like I Have the Flu”**

You may have a breast infection. The flu-like symptoms of mastitis often come first, before the breast becomes painful. Yes, you can continue to breast feed. Call your doctor as soon as possible. You may need an antibiotic; your doctor will decide the safest, best course of treatment for you.

### **“There Is Something Hard and White On My Nipple and It Hurts”**

This is known as a milk bleb or milk blister. It is caused by layers of skin forming over a duct opening and trapping milk behind it. It can be extremely painful. Keep nursing and try to massage the bleb out. Sometimes it may be necessary to pierce the skin with a sterilized needle to free the blockage. Call your doctor.

### **“My Baby Is Allergic To My Milk”**

Babies are not allergic to breastmilk, but they can have a sensitivity or allergy to something in mommy’s diet. Removing the culprit from your diet should take care of your baby’s discomfort. Common culprits are milk or soy. Contact your baby’s doctor or lactation counselor to discuss an elimination diet.

### **“My Baby’s Tongue and Gums Have White Patches”**

If you see white patches in your baby’s mouth or you have red, itchy nipples or painful breasts during and after feeding your baby, you and your baby may have thrush. Thrush is a mild yeast infection that is easily treated. Contact your doctor, he will prescribe an anti-fungal medication to treat you and your baby. Remember when treating for thrush to boil any plastic that touches your breast or the baby’s mouth every night.