

Plugged Ducts and Mastitis



Plugged Ducts If you notice a small lump the size of a pea in your breasts, it may be a plugged duct. This occurs when a portion of the breast does not get emptied completely during feedings. Apply a warm compress to the area before a feeding and massage the lump towards the nipple. You can also massage towards the nipple during a feeding. It may take 2 or 3 feedings for it to completely empty. You may also position your baby's chin towards the area of the lump. This is where the greatest emptying will occur.

If you find a persistent lump that does not respond to these measures, please see your physician. It could be a different problem.

Mastitis occurs most frequently in mothers who have had a cracked or blistered nipple or who are undergoing a period of stress such as returning to work, participating in holiday activities or experiencing a change in normal daily routine.



Symptoms may include:

High fever, starting suddenly

Hot, reddened area

Red streaks

Pain and a lump in the breast

Hard wedge shaped area

Flu like symptoms, chills

Extreme tiredness

Apply warm compresses before feedings and do some gentle breast massage. Keep your breast empty by frequent nursing. It is important to continue to breastfeed, even on the affected side. If your baby does not empty that side well, use a good quality breast pump after feedings. Apply ice after feedings for 10 - 15 minutes for the first day or two. During this time, rest in bed as much as you can and drink plenty of fluids.

Your physician, usually your obstetrician or family doctor, will prescribe an antibiotic. You must take a full 7-10 day course of medication. Do not stop taking it until the prescription is gone even though you start to feel better. Inadequately treated mastitis is more likely to return.

Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this program.

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