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*Photo Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

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EASING NIPPLE SORENESS

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING



*USBC

Breastfeeding is not supposed to hurt. Some people may feel very slight soreness when babies, less than 2 weeks old, latch onto the breast. This is normal — don't give up! This feeling eases within the first 45 to 60 seconds of nursing. When a baby is about 3 to 5 days old, the soreness may become more intense. It is okay to ask for help at this time. The discomfort or tenderness should stop by the time baby is 10 days old. By the end of baby's second week of life most people do not have nipple soreness.

When to contact a breastfeeding specialist for extra help

- Your nipples are cracked or bleeding.
- There are blisters on your nipples.
- You still feel sore after the baby is 2 weeks old.
- The soreness lasts the whole feeding.
- The soreness begins after your baby is 2 weeks old.



Tips to prevent or relieve sore nipples and increase comfort

Check that you and your baby are positioned well

Having your baby positioned the right way is one of the most important ways to prevent nipple soreness. Your baby should be facing your breast and not turning their head. Their ear, shoulder, and hip should all be in a straight line. Baby's tummy should be facing your body.

Check to see that baby has a deep latch

You should notice that a large portion of your areola, the dark area around your nipple, is in your baby's mouth (about 1 to 1 1/2 inches back from the tip of the nipple). Your baby's lips should form a seal around your breast and should be turned out. Baby should be in close, with chin and cheek touching your breast and nose either just touching or very close to your breast.

Breastfeed often

Nurse your baby at least 8 to 12 times during the day and night usually every 2 to 3 hours. Be sure to nurse long enough to soften and empty the breast.

Notice early signs of hunger

Offer the breast when baby shows early hunger signs, such as when they open their mouth wide or put one or both fists in their mouth. This will allow you to nurse before your baby gets so hungry that they are upset. A calm baby is more likely to latch on and nurse well.



Nurse on the less sore breast first

Your baby's suck is often strongest at the start of the feeding. When you switch to the more sore breast, your baby's suck will most likely feel more comfortable.

Try different feeding positions

Lean back and get comfortable. Vary between football hold, cradle hold, and laid back nursing. This will change the place on your breast where baby's suck is strongest.

Remove a small amount of milk

Try to hand express or pump a little milk to soften the breast tissue if it is hard for your baby to latch onto your breast.

Break suction before taking your baby off of the breast

If your baby has not released suction, gently put your finger in the corner of your baby's mouth, between their gums.

Express your milk if you are too sore to nurse

If you feel too uncomfortable to put baby to breast, hand express or use a pump to remove milk often. Save the milk that you collect to use at a time when baby is not feeding at breast.

Tips for treating sore nipples

Use breastmilk to help heal your nipples

Express a little milk after your baby is done feeding. Gently rub it on your nipples and allow to dry. This protects and heals your skin.

Use purified lanolin to ease soreness and promote healing

Apply a thin coat of purified lanolin (such as Lansinoh or Tender Care Lanolin) to the nipple after each nursing. This does not need to be washed off before the next feeding.

Avoid soaps and body creams

Soaps can dry your nipples and get in the way of your body's natural lubricant.

If you use nursing pads, change them often

If your milk leaks between feedings, nursing pads can improve your comfort and help keep your nipples dry. Change the pads each time they become damp so your nipples do not get chapped and more sore.

