

Mastitis

Mastitis is inflammation of the breast, which may lead to infection.

Causes

- Rapid weaning
- Inadequate drainage of breast milk
- Poor attachment to the breast
- Nipple trauma
- Missed feeds

Prevention

Mastitis can be prevented. Following a breastfeed, the breasts should feel softer and more comfortable, with no hard, tender lumps remaining.

Early management of mastitis

It is important to start treatment at the first signs of mastitis:

- **Application of warmth to the affected area of the breast**
- Gently massage any breast lumps
- Breastfeed or express the breast until the area is softened and feels more comfortable
- You may need to repeat this process a number of times before the blockage resolves
- If the symptoms do not improve it is important to seek medical advice.

The milk is safe for your baby. It is important to continue to breastfeed or express from the affected breast. If the breast is not well drained, symptoms may worsen and the milk supply may drop in this breast.

Subsequent management of mastitis

- Continue to breastfeed and/or express
- **Prior to feeding or expressing apply warmth to the affected area to improve milk flow**
- Following massage/ breastfeeding / expressing, apply a cool pack for a few minutes to reduce discomfort
- Pain relief tablets may be necessary eg Paracetamol or Ibuprofen
- Maintain a good fluid intake (up to 8 glasses of water per day)
- It is important to rest as much as possible

- If antibiotics are prescribed, take as directed. Your doctor will ensure any antibiotic prescribed is safe for your baby.

Where to get further information

Royal Women's Hospital

Breastfeeding Education & Support Services (BESS)

Tel: (03) 9344 3651

Women's Health Information Centre (WHIC)

Tel: (03) 8345 3045

1800 442 007 (rural callers)

Other contacts

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline

Tel: (03) 9885 0653

(see website for contact details of other states)

Web: <http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au>

Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)

Tel: 13 22 29

Australian Lactation Consultants Association

Web: <http://www.alca.asn.au>